

Troubleshoot Your Position Problems

Dressage

TODAY

August 2015

ANNUAL
Baroque ISSUE

EXPLORE
THE ROYAL
ANDALUSIAN
SCHOOL OF
EQUESTRIAN
ART

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Dressage
Education on
a Budget

THE THEORY
AND PRACTICE
OF DRESSAGE
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With Janet Foy





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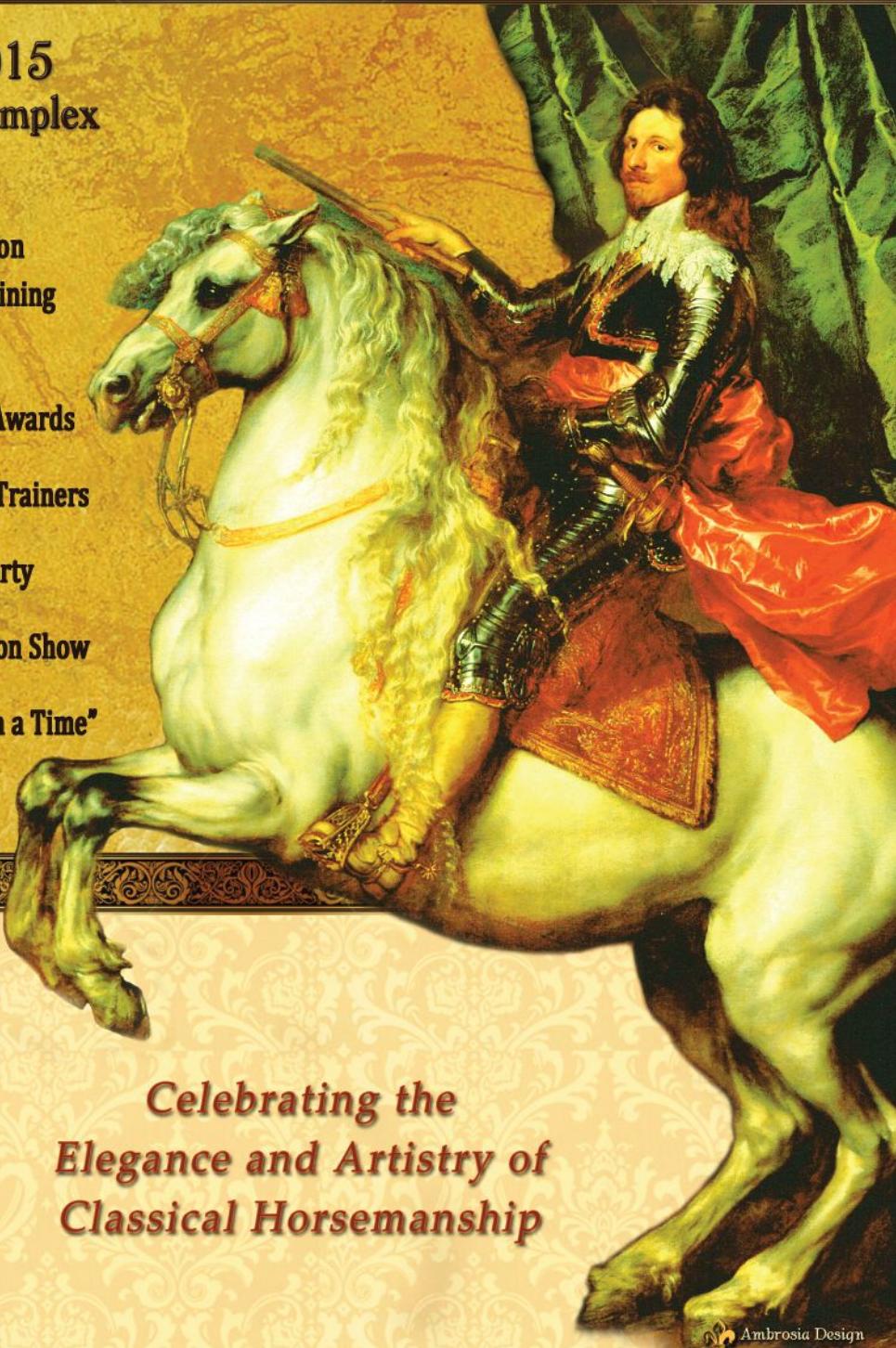
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About the Cover: Friesian in Russian field
Photo by Katya Druz - Arnd.nl

Learn By Levels Key

These icons will help you identify level-appropriate exercises for you and your horse ...



Intro
Level



Training
Level



First
Level



Second
Level



Third
Level



Fourth
Level



FEI
Level



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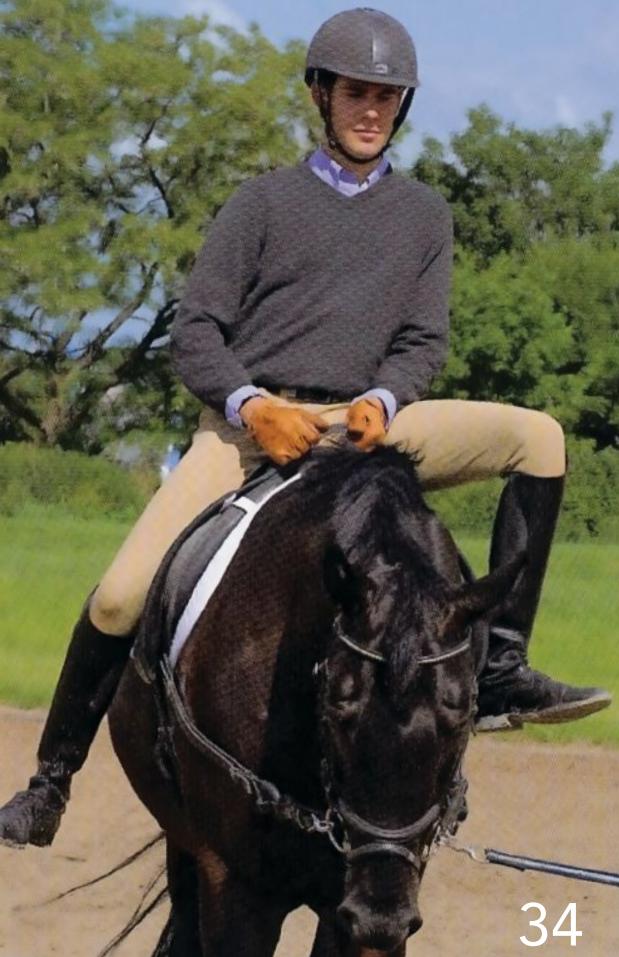
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- ▶ U.S. Olympian Adrienne Lyle—check out news and tips from this top Grand Prix competitor.

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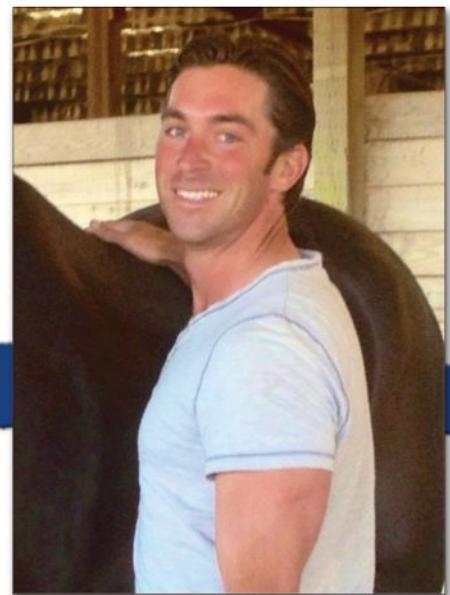


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~ Guenter Seidel



inside dt

Diversity Equals Beauty

When I was a child, I would spend hours looking through my library of horse breed books. I had many favorites, including the Friesian with his flowing black mane and tail and the Clydesdale with his gorgeous feathers. What I loved most was the diversity of all the breeds and yet how they were all the same: horses.

Each year we bring you our annual baroque issue, and each time I work on this special issue, I remember how I felt looking through those breed books so many years ago. The diversity of the many horses we see in dressage is not only beautiful, but inspirational. It reminds me that no matter what breed of horse you ride, you can still ride dressage.

This month we feature Friesians, Lusitanos and more. Our first feature takes us to southern Spain and the Royal Andalusian School of Equestrian Art. Steeped in history and tradition, the Royal School is dedicated to the preservation and promotion of purebred Spanish horses (*Pura Raza Españolas*, or P.R.E.s) and classical and country-style dressage. Established in 1973, the school now boasts an indoor arena with seating for 1,600 spectators and stables for 60 horses. To learn more about the history, performances and art at the Royal School, turn to p. 26.

While many of us are familiar with the P.R.E., we're happy to also feature the Lipizzan in this year's issue. This breed, known mostly for performances in Austria and in exhibitions around the U.S., had quite a showing during this year's Adequan Global Dressage Festival. You can read about that in Arena on p. 15 and then learn about dressage rider Allen Kalchik's desire to purchase a Lipizzan to take him through the levels. His story starts on p. 46.

Of course, our special baroque issue wouldn't be complete without our "Baroque Horse Photo Gallery" (p. 50). This year's collage includes a gorgeous selection of breeds caught in various moments of freedom as well as under saddle.

We didn't want to leave you without any training this month. So in addition to our baroque articles, we bring you Part 2 of Isabelle von Nuemann-Cosel's "Improve Your Seat" series (p. 34). Last month she explained the process of recognizing, analyzing and understanding the reasons for your position problems, and this month she offers some exercises to help overcome those problems.

Other articles include an excerpt from the new book *Dressage Q&A with Janet Foy* (p. 60), "Dressage on a Budget" (p. 56) and "Taking the Lead" (p. 40), a story about George Williams and Charlotte Bredahl-Baker—the newly appointed coaches of the USEF Youth Dressage Program.

I hope this issue inspires you to ride and embrace the diversity of all breeds.

Until next time,
Jennifer Mellace, Editor
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letters



Happy Horse

Thank you for publishing "A Riding Renaissance" ("Transitions," May '15), a story about bitless dressage. It's a story that needs telling. I've had a very similar experience with my PRE mare. She began to show discomfort with the snaffle at age 10 by head tossing, refusing to canter and not listening to the aids. I tried nearly all the dressage-legal options, but none made any difference and she became more resentful. Now that we are bitless, she wants to work. She is happy, forward, relaxed and so responsive to the aids. We are schooling Second Level and I would love to be able to show her, but

I would not make her suffer again in a bit. Her happiness and joy in her work is worth much more than ribbons.

Sharon Small, Oregon

The Essentials

I like *Dressage Today* because it describes how to ride, how the rider should be positioned and what the horse does when the rider performs certain actions.

Facebook Fan

Correction

The photo on page 45 of the June issue was incorrectly attributed.

Photographer Terri Miller took the photo of Jen and Bruce Hlavacek with Weltino's Magic (right).

The photo credit on page 56 of the July issue should be © SSilver from Fotolia.com.



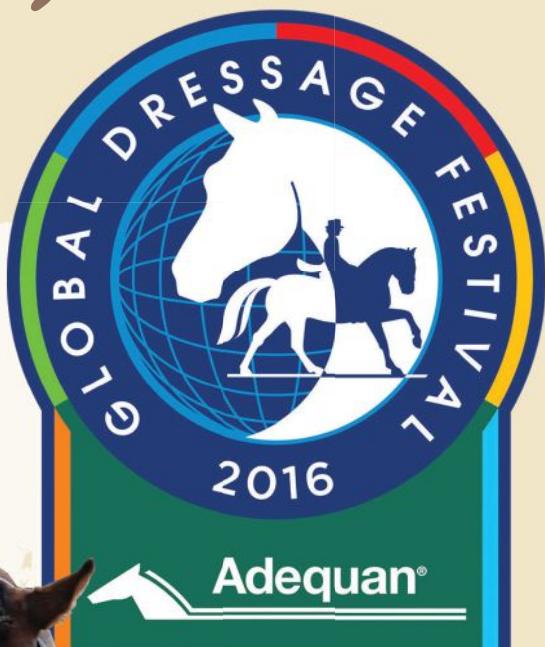
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BAROQUE HORSE CLUB UPDATES

The Friesian Horse Association of North America (FHANA) prides itself on being the only North American organization sanctioned by the Royal Friesian Horse Association of the Netherlands (KFPS). FHANA is responsible for running the Friesian registry in North America in addition to performing inspections, managing breeding and foaling records and coordinating stallion approvals each year.

In 2014, FHANA inspected more than 600 Friesians across the United States and Canada. FHANA approved a young stallion, Julius 486, who received some of the highest scores internationally. In addition to new stallion approvals, FHANA is also responsible for retesting already-approved stallions through a General Aptitude and Utility Test for Friesian Horses. This includes analyzing the stallion's offspring for suitability and positive contributions to the breed. Sipke 450, an approved stallion, passed the test and will remain in breeding programs. In the show ring, Friesians were invited to the 2014 Rolex Kentucky Three-Day Event as demo horses and many Friesians qualified for USDF awards.

Founded in 1992, the Eastern Region Andalusian Horse Club (ERAHC) is dedicated to the showing, training and promotion of Andalusian, Lusitano and part-Iberian horses. Club members host and participate in shows and clinics as well as perform in annual breed exhibitions. Typically, the club hosts an annual USDF open dressage show and a USEF regional championship breed show called the Virginia Classic. However in 2015, the club will be involved in the International Andalusian and

Lusitano Horse Association's (IALHA) National Championship show, held August 24–30 at the Virginia Horse Center in Lexington, Virginia.

In 2014, Cortes, a P.R.E. bred by Karen Lewis, won sport-horse handling classes at Dressage at Devon that were both breed-specific and against other breeds. This year, Aragon GAF, a P.R.E. stallion owned by Cynthia and Craig Roberts, won several classes against other breeds at the Lexington Spring Dressage Show in Virginia.

The Foundation for the Pure Spanish Horse (FPSH) is a nonprofit organization that works to promote the P.R.E.

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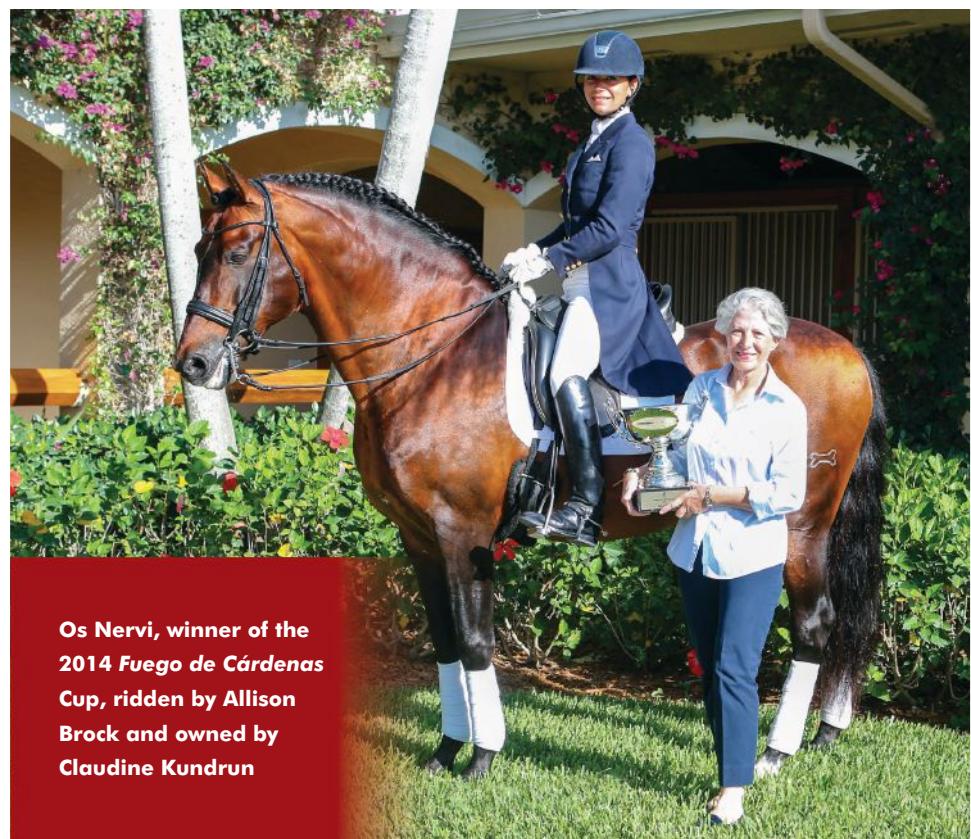
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**Os Nervi, winner of the
2014 Fuego de Cárdenas
Cup, ridden by Allison
Brock and owned by
Claudine Kundrun**

horse and its participation in a variety of disciplines suitable for the breed. The foundation is responsible for an independent registry called the P.R.E. Mundial Registry and also hosts educational events across the United States. In addition, the organization works to protect the P.R.E. breed through a number of rescue and adoption programs.

The foundation recognizes the accomplishments of many P.R.E. horses and riders in USDF competitions. In 2014, the *Fuego de Cárdenas* Cup was awarded to Os Nervi, owned by Claudine Kundrun and ridden by Allison Brock. The pair won the Open Grand Prix at Region 1's GAIG/USDF Breeders' Championship show. The winner of the *Norte Lovera* Cup was Nexus GF, owned by Teri Young and ridden by Kim Elsner. The pair won the USDF Region 7 Open First Level Championship.

The United States P.R.E. Association (USPRE) was founded in 2007 to promote the Pure Spanish Horse in the United States. The organization manages the P.R.E. Studbook for both the

United States and Canada and governs more than 1,700 breeders. One of the organization's major accomplishments in 2014 was establishing the inaugural *Copa USPRE*, an award open to all USPRE members riding at the FEI levels. At the end of each year, winners are selected based on the highest average scores from the previous show season. Winners then receive an invitation to compete at the International *Copa Finales* against top ranked P.R.E.s in Spain.

This year, several riders with P.R.E. horses performed at national and international levels, including Janne Rumbough, Adult Amateur National Champion at Grand Prix, and Susan Treabess, a USPRE member, who competed on the United States Para Equestrian Team at the 2014 World Equestrian Games.

As the largest North American Lipizzan registry, the **United States Lipizzan Federation (USLF)** works to promote the breed as an exceptional equine companion, while preserving its heritage as well as educating USLF members and enthusiasts of the breed.

The USLF offers numerous awards, hosts an annual symposium and oversees breed inspection tours across the country. In early 2015, the registry launched a new program called "Lipizzan Laurels," designed to promote the

Dressage Abbreviations

A guide to the most commonly used abbreviations in *Dressage Today*:

FEI	<i>Fédération Equestre Internationale</i>
GMO	Group Member Organization
USDF	United States Dressage Federation
USEF	United States Equestrian Federation

versatility of the breed. This program rewards members of the USLF competing in multiple disciplines, including driving, trail, western and endurance racing.

In dressage, Adult Amateur Katy Mylykangas competed aboard Kate Phillips' stallion, Favery Canada, at First Level, placing fourth at the 2014 U.S. Dressage Finals. Amanda Johnson rode Tempel Farms' stallion, Pluto VI Andorella, in the Grand Prix Open Freestyle Finals while Esther Mortimer, riding Kirsten Wilson's stallion, Pluto Virtuosa 47, competed at the 2015 Global Dressage Festival with wins at Fourth Level.

BAROQUE EQUESTRIAN GAMES

The 2015 annual Baroque Equestrian Games (BEG) will be held September 18–20 at the Virginia Horse Center in Lexington, Virginia. The event offers four different sections of competition, including ground work, classical schooling, mounted maneuvers and musical presentation. BEG founder Tina Christiani Veder says the event focuses on riding and training techniques

from the classical schools of the Baroque period.

Sue Ott riding her Lipizzan mare, Pandora, at the 2014 Baroque Equestrian Games

In addition to competition, BEG includes a breeders' showcase, guest speakers and educational seminars. For more information about the event, visit baroquegames.com.



Courtesy, Judy Robichaux



An open-minded advocate for change who embraced innovation and was respected for her high standards, dressage pioneer and three-time USEF international competitor Alexandra "Sandy" Howard (1940-2013) chose RP saddles for her competitive horses for the last decade of her life, riding in RP saddles on EuroPro I to (above) through FEI levels and on Rondo from young horse to Grand Prix.

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Neurectomy

When is it a viable treatment option?

By Laura A. Werner, DVM, MS, DACVS

Neurectomy, or palmar digital neurectomy, is a surgical procedure in which a portion of the nerve supply to the foot of the horse is cut or removed for the treatment of heel pain or navicular disease. The procedure was much more common before the widespread availability of MRI. This is because a proper diagnosis with the use of MRI often allows treatment to be tailored to the exact injury or disease in the complicated anatomy of the foot and heel areas of the horse. New treatments for navicular disease such as tiludronate (Tildren) or clodronate (Osphos) have also significantly helped affected horses. These two medications are classified as bisphosphonate drugs and are similar to those used for osteoporosis in women. They inhibit cells that break down bone and are approved for treating navicular disease in horses.

Currently, I recommend neurectomy only as a last resort when other treatment options have been performed, the horse has become refractory to other treatments and a soft-tissue injury has not been found on an MRI. Horses that are candidates for a palmar digital neurectomy should block completely to a palmar digital nerve block or a diagnostic nerve block of only the heel of the foot and have no soft tissue injury to the foot. If the lameness does not localize to the heels, then a neurectomy procedure will not be successful and the horse may remain lame.

Complications of this kind of neurectomy can include formation of a painful neuroma, or ball of nerves, at the surgery site, sloughing of the foot, luxation of the coffin joint and rupture of the deep digital flexor tendon. Rupture of the deep flexor tendon or further injury to soft-tissue structures can occur if the lameness has not been properly localized to the navicular bone alone. The procedure is also not permanent as the nerves can grow back and the disease process that caused the lameness still continues. Horses that have a neurectomy procedure need to be observed carefully as they will lose sensation in the heels. So if they step on a nail, for instance, they will not feel the foreign object in the foot.

In other cases, a neurectomy of the deep branch of the lateral plantar nerve, which is closer to the area in the hock rather than the heel, is a viable option for horses with chronic suspensory disease at the origin or where the ligament attaches to the cannon bone. Pain or chronic lameness often remains even after



Arnd Bronkhorst/And.nl

Lateral
palmar
digital
nerve

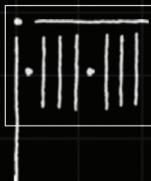


Deep
branch
of the
lateral
plantar
nerve

proper treatment and rehabilitation due to enlargement of the ligament, causing a compartment-like syndrome and compression on the nerve. A very small branch of the lateral plantar nerve that supplies the suspensory origin is removed during the procedure. The main nerve supply to the foot and limb is not affected. Scientific studies have shown that neurectomy of the branch causes atrophy of the muscular component of the suspensory ligament, therefore causing a reduction in size of the ligament and improvement in nerve impingement and compartment syndrome.

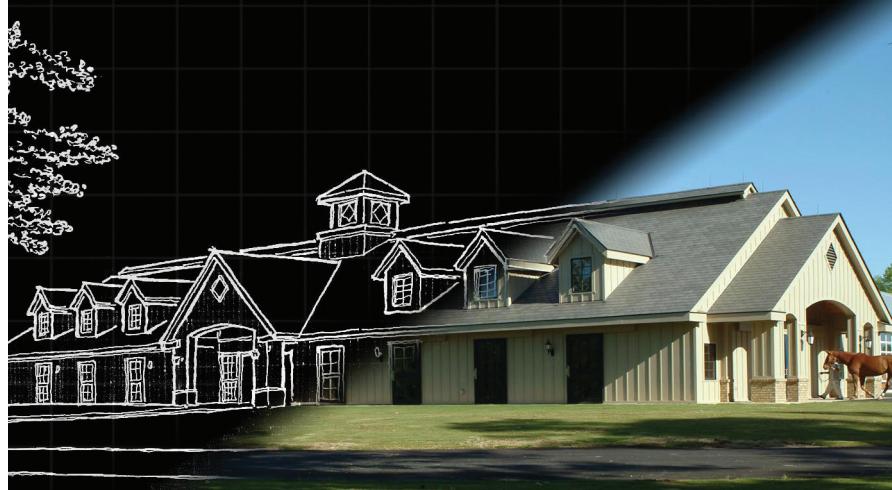
Today, a neurectomy of the deep branch of the lateral plantar nerve is more commonly performed than neurectomy of the lower limb. It has a much lower complication rate than palmar digital neurectomy and presents less danger to the horse and rider as the main nerve supply to the limb is intact. If the procedure is successful and with no other underlying issues, the horse can generally return to full work. However, it is not legal to compete in FEI events after a horse has undergone a neurectomy procedure. ■

Laura A. Werner, DVM, MS, DACVS, joined Hagyard Equine Medical Institute in 2011 as a surgery associate in the Davidson Surgery Center and is a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons. She specializes in lameness and equine emergency services. In addition to her experience as a surgeon, Dr. Werner is an FEI Veterinary Delegate for eventing and will soon complete her show-jumping requirement. While at Hagyard, she will be continuing her research on septic arthritis and osteomyelitis, which she began as a resident.



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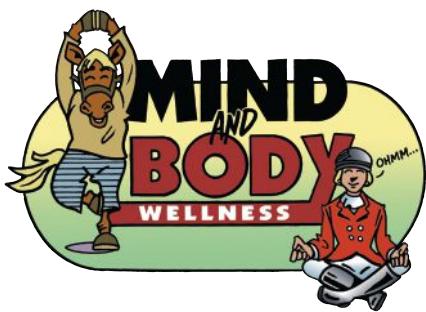
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MENTAL FITNESS:

EXPANDING WHAT YOU KNOW

By Jenny Susser, PhD

Let's define "mental fitness" as the current strength of your brain and your level of knowledge. If information is power, then let's get some more power!

This month's column is meant to be a guide for you to create a personalized plan for increasing your mental fitness. If we can put our emotions aside (until next month's column on emotional fitness), we can look at our goals, our progress and our methods with a more objective and evaluative mind, giving us true power.

I repeatedly see riders stuck at a certain level and completely at a loss for how to move forward. This happens partly because the ability to accurately assess their current system is failing and their level of knowledge stagnates. So, how do you accurately assess your progress?

The first step is to identify your goal or goals (see January's column). Take the time to set your goals, since they will guide you to success. Once you have written goals, then you need to identify your predicted pathway to reach these goals. The predicted pathway to your goals is a list of actions to take or skills to improve or acquire—what do you need to physically do in order to reach them? Many of us set goals but miss the part where we figure out the path. The actions are key, but because we get all caught up in the feeling part of the goal, we can forget about the work it takes to get there. As you look at your goal, what is its current status and how is your progress? Be data-driven here and void of emotions. "Just the facts, ma'am" will give you that powerful evaluation. What actions are you taking currently that are helping you get there and what actions do you need to start

taking? Figuring this out can be difficult, but don't let that stop you. As you evaluate your current progress, whatever little (or big) course corrections you need to take should become visible. I am a big fan of writing things out—it helps not only to record our thoughts, but access deeper parts of the brain. These two steps involve your trainer or support system and your horse. When you know your goals and you have an idea of how to pursue them, then you have to fill your metaphorical toolbox for the journey.

So you now know you need more information, and learning provides the access. Have you ever thought about how you learn? We spend a great deal of time as young people being students and learning how to learn, but what happens after we graduate? Typically, we forget how to learn and forget that it's an essential part of pursuing goals and growth in general. What kind of learning works for you? Do you know?

There are three main types of learners: visual, auditory and kinesthetic. A visual learner digests information best by seeing. Videos, graphics, written material and demonstrations are great for visual learners. An auditory learner learns best by hearing information. Lectures, instructions and stories help these learners. Kinesthetic learners do best by feeling, touching or trying something. Most people are a combination of visual and kinesthetic: They like to watch something and then try it. It is important to know which way you learn best so you can design your educational system to match. This is also helpful to share with your trainer so he or she can help you learn the best way possible.

Now that you have identified your goals, created a working model or pathway to success and designed your instruction with your learning style in mind, the last area to consider is what you need to learn. What do you need to know more about? I don't know about



Jenny Susser has a doctoral degree and is licensed in clinical health psychology, specializing in sport psychology. A four-year all-American swimmer at UCLA, she swam on two national teams and at the 1988 Olympic Trials. She has worked with athletes of all sports and ages—collegiate, professional, international and amateur. She was the sport psychologist for the 2010 WEG South African Para-Dressage Team and the 2012 U.S. Olympic Dressage Team. Dr. Jenny is also a performance coach with Human Performance.

you, but the more I know and understand, the better I feel in any situation. New research has also proven that even your intuition can be improved by information, education and experience. The more you know, the more power you have to create desired results by making informed and empowered decisions.

Where do you feel powerful in your riding, horsemanship and horse care?

Where do you feel powerless or wish you knew more? And the most important question is: Do you wish to change any of this? Look to see which areas you want to learn more about and then become systematic in approaching them.

When you rediscover your passion for learning, many of those seemingly immoveable roadblocks will begin to disappear and your success will take on

a new look, filled with happiness and fulfillment. We ride dressage after all, and the mental element is a powerful reason we are attracted to this complicated, challenging and wonderful sport. As you strengthen your mental fitness, your riding success will follow.

Next month: Emotional Fitness—Can You Take It?

EXERCISES TO IMPROVE LEG POSITION AND CONTROL

By *Rebecca Ashton* • Photos by *Norma Ashton*

Now that we have brought awareness to our torso, this month we are going to look at leg stability. When you ride, your legs should stretch down to help anchor your pelvis. They should rest against your horse's side like wet towels, breathing with him and ready to give a stronger aid if necessary. Good control of your leg creates clearer communication with your horse. You need to be able to apply appropriate leg pressure whenever you want. Your thigh should be snug against the saddle, but not restrictive, with your knees and toes pointing forward.

Too strong a leg and your hips, knees and ankles become locked, leading to possible tightness or even injury that results from reduced shock-absorbing ability. Your horse can also become tense and his breathing restricted. In this position, there is no leeway for you to give a clear aid, as your legs are already pressed hard against your horse's sides. Too loose a leg and you will lose stability in your pelvis. Constant involuntary leg aids will cause your horse to become dead to your leg and eventually ignore it altogether. Your leg will also lose effectiveness as it becomes sloppy with a lifted heel and no remnant of positive tension. In this state, there will be no inside leg for your horse to bend around on a circle and no outside leg to guard against swinging hindquarters.

Riders often use too much of their gluteus maximus and external hip rotator muscles, which leads to legs that would be better suited to a frog than a horse rider. This, as well as overuse of the muscles on the inside of the thigh, the adductors, pushes the seat bones out of the saddle. Relaxing your buttocks and getting better control from the gluteus

minimus and the anterior fibers of the gluteus medius help to lower your center of gravity and allow your seat bones to sink into the saddle. This aids a deep seat while keeping your leg in a slightly internally rotated position and still allowing your lower leg to give aids.

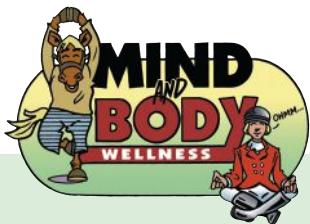
To see how well your gluteus medius and minimus muscles help you ride, begin seated in the saddle. Maintain a slight bend in your knee and external rotation of your lower leg, allowing for an approximately 30-degree turn out



Diagonal-Line Clam Setup



Diagonal-Line Clam Movement



of your foot. Take your legs away from your horse at your hip, rotate them in and extend them back before replacing them against your horse's sides.

These exercises will help you switch on the required muscles to help control your legs without disrupting the balance and stability of your torso achieved by previous core exercises.

Diagonal-Line Clams

This exercise will help you find your gluteus minimus muscle and the anterior fibers of your gluteus medius at the side of your seat, which will help you lift your legs off the horse and internally rotate them. When the exercise is executed slowly and with purpose, your

muscles will gain the ability to control and support your hip joint. Make sure your knees remain stacked, as it is often easy to let your top knee roll behind your lower knee, but you must avoid this serious misalignment.

Setup:

- Lie on your side with your knees bent at a 45-degree angle. Rest your head on your lower hand with a bent elbow. Make sure there is a little space under your lower waist to ensure your hips and knees remain stacked while keeping your ribs connected to the ground.
- Add lateral breathing, inhaling through your nose and out through your mouth. Switch off your global muscles and switch on your core.

Instruction of Movement:

- Breathe in and touch your top knee to the ground, just in front of your lower knee with the top lower leg aligned on a diagonal line heading slightly behind your body. Your entire top leg should be slightly internally rotated from your hip with your top foot flexed.
- Breathe out and slowly straighten your top leg. Maintain resistance, feeling as if you're pushing something heavy away with your top foot. Keep your hips stacked and maintain the internal rotation of your leg. You will find at the top of the move, your leg has reached a dressage position. Breathe in at the top of the move and breathe out to resist slowly back to start.
- Repeat 10 times, then switch sides.

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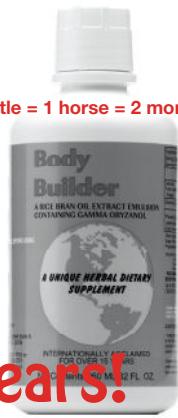
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Seated Pigeon Stretch

Seated Pigeon Stretch

If your toes stick out when you ride, your lateral rotator muscles might be too tight. This exercise will help stretch them out, making it easier to find your internal rotators in the exercise above.

- Sit with your knees bent and hands supporting you behind, with fingers facing toward you. You may also prefer



Rebecca Ashton is a qualified Pilates instructor, a British Horse Society-trained instructor and an Equestrian Australia-accredited dressage coach. She has competed through Intermediaire II, working with riders such as Anky van Grunsven and earning championship titles in the small tour. She lives in Australia and teaches clinics internationally (equestelite.com).

to sit against a wall.

- Cross one leg over the other so that your upper leg is supported by the opposite knee. You should feel a stretch in the back of the buttock of the leg that is crossed.
- Rock side to side until you find the tightest muscle fibers and hold the position there for a few breaths. Repeat on the other side. 

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PHOTO CRITIQUES by Susanne von Dietze

Susanne von Dietze is a leader in equestrian biomechanics. A physiotherapist, licensed Trainer A instructor and judge for dressage and show jumping, she gives lectures and seminars throughout the world, including at the prestigious German Riding Academy in Warendorf. She is a native of Germany and now lives with her husband and three children in Israel, where she competes at the international level. She is the author of two books on the biomechanics of riding: Balance in Movement and Horse and Rider, Back to Back. Find her books at HorseBooksEtc.com.



Create Light Contact

This picture shows Hallie Eisenhouer riding the 9-year-old Lipizzan gelding, Pluto Fantasia. The pair is currently working at Training Level. Pluto is a typical Lipizzan, with a compact body, nice, strong neck and powerful hind legs. In this picture, he is stretching nicely forward and downward in the trot while displaying good activity in his hind legs.

Hallie clearly wants to help him stretch and activate his engine at the same time. However, she shows a tendency to sit a bit behind her horse's movement and keep her hands too low. I often see riders who want to lower their horses' heads press their own hands down too low. This may, for a moment, be successful as it imitates the function of side reins, but it does not teach the rider or the horse the correct feel for the contact. On the contrary, it more often ends with the horse falling heavier on the forehand. As I look at the photograph more closely, I notice that Hallie is actually not pressing down with her hands, but instead she is merely relaxing her arms—however, the weight of her forearm is making her whole arm drop down too low.

In this picture and in the short video clip (<http://bit.ly/1Gp5w1T>), I notice that Hallie tries to give Pluto as much rein as possible. Often when encouraging him to stretch, she drops the contact of the reins completely. It is not uncommon to see that when a rider gives a horse more rein, the horse might relax more in his body, but he also might sacrifice some core stability at the same moment.

A consistent contact is necessary for the horse to stretch to the bit. Stretching

is work. If I do a stretching workout for myself, I work hard with my body. It is important for Hallie to understand that a supple moving horse with a supple sitting rider requires a lot of strength, which then requires positive tension and core stability.

It might help Hallie to concentrate on what her exact goal is at a particular moment and then ask herself why she feels the need to release the contact. I sometimes verbally ask my riders that exact same question: Why are you giving the contact?

In riding we can use a giving moment in the reins to help establish:

- contact
- balance
- rhythm
- self-carriage
- lightness
- flexion
- attention
- security
- softness

• ... the list can be continued.

But note that the rider should never throw away the contact or drop the contact with the horse. If you use a giving moment in the reins, make sure that you are doing it intentionally and with a particular goal in mind.

Consistent contact helps the horse balance between forward-pushing power and carrying power—also known as extension and collection, respectively.

My cousin, Felicitas von Neumann-Cosel, described the concept of ideal contact to me once by using an image of a ballet dancer reaching out for a pole while maintaining a difficult balance pose. Just the dancer's fingertips on the pole can be enough to stabilize this fragile position. But if the pole is suddenly taken away, the dancer will stumble out of the balanced posture.

This is similar to a horse that is reach-



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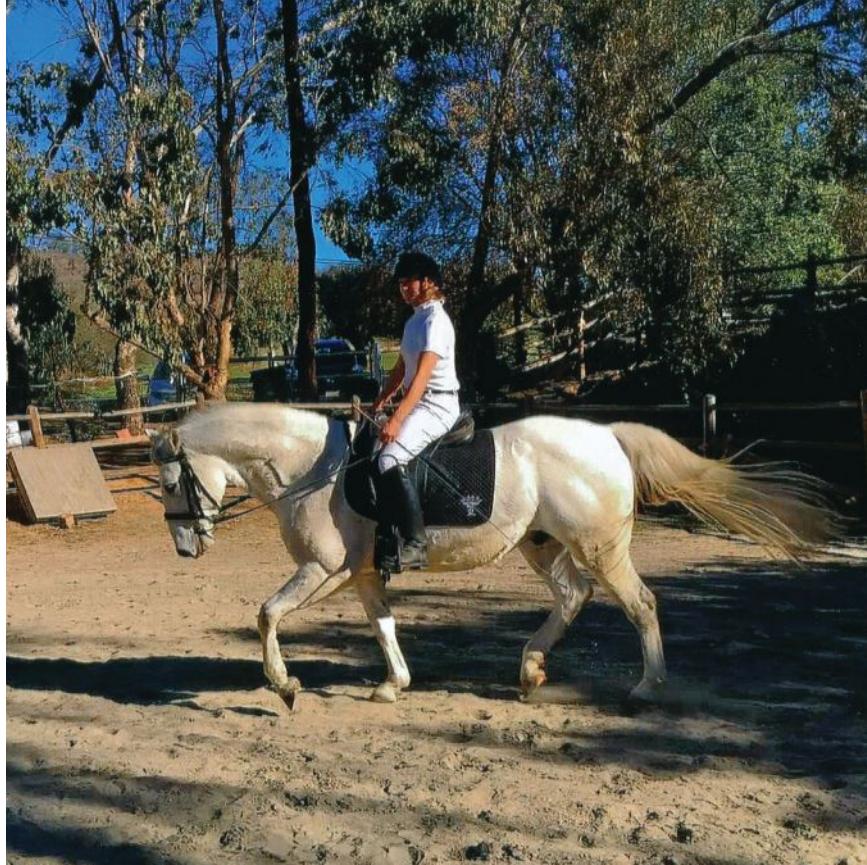


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Courtesy, Hallie Eisenhauer

Hallie Eisenhauer rides Pluto Fantasia, a 9-year-old Lipizzan at Training Level.

ing to the contact—a very light contact can improve and secure the horse's self-carriage and balance, encouraging him to stretch through his topline. But if this contact suddenly disappears, this balance will be disturbed and the picture of harmony and lightness will vanish as if someone put a needle into a balloon. The idea that a light contact should help the horse balance gives a clearer meaning to the word "rein aid." It is an aid, not a force.

With intention and purpose linked to the idea of light contact, Hallie may find it easier to stay taller in her seat and develop more positive tension. This will make it easier for her nice Lipizzan to stretch into the contact and maintain this position for a longer pe-

riod and especially during transitions. I hope that this gives Hallie some ideas to focus on in her training to improve steady contact to the bit. ■

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Art

An inside look into the school that preserves
the heritage of the purebred Spanish horse

By Diane E. Barber • Photos by Diane E. Barber and courtesy
of the Royal Andalusian School of Equestrian Art

The city of *Jerez de la Frontera* on the Iberian Peninsula in southern Spain is globally renowned not only as the sherry and flamenco capital of the world, but also for the prestigious *Fundación Real Escuela Andaluza del Arte Ecuestre* (Royal Andalusian School of Equestrian Art), which is home to some of the finest



History of the Royal School

Steeped in aristocratic history and tradition, the Royal School is dedicated to the preservation and promotion of purebred Spanish horses (*Pura Raza Españolas*, or P.R.E.s) and classical and country-style dressage. The school was established in 1973 when Don Alvaro Domecq Romero, of the esteemed Domecq sherry-producing family, was recognized for his significant contributions to the horse world and was awarded the *Caballo de Oro* (Golden Horse) trophy by Prince Juan Carlos (later the King of Spain)—the highest equestrian honor in the country. In celebration of the prestigious award, Domecq presented a dressage show with 15 horses and riders choreographed to Spanish music called “*Como Bailan los Caballos Andaluces*” (“How the Andalusian Horses Dance”)—the first of many performances that would span decades.

The tourism ministry of Andalusia eventually assumed management of Domecq’s school and built an indoor arena with seating for 1,600 spectators and stables for 60 horses on a former palatial private estate named *Recreo de las Cadenas*. In 1982, the ownership and management changed hands to a municipal governing body headed by the province of Cadiz. One year later, the government of Andalucia took the helm and appointed Domecq as the technical director. The acquisition of a stable of 35 Spanish horses and a collection of 19 horse-drawn carriages, harnesses, tack and coachmen costumes from another Domecq family member (Don Pedro Domecq de la Riva) was instrumental in the future success of the school. Other key milestones included King Juan Carlos I lending official royalty to the name “Royal School” when he accepted the position of Honorary President in 1987 (still held by the King today) and the school’s recognition as a foundation in 2003, thus allowing private funding.

horses in the world.

Managed by the Andalusian government, the Royal School is famous worldwide for its year-round performances of “How the Andalusian Horses Dance,” which has delighted interna-

tional audiences for more than 40 years. Riders and horses adorned in 18th-century-style costumes perform what is lauded as an equestrian ballet choreographed to classical music written and composed expressly for the produc-

tion. The captivating and technically difficult performances are simply titled “*Pas de Deux*,” “*Passage and Piaffe*,” “*Airs Above the Ground*,” “*Airs on Horseback*” and a solo performance called “*Fantasy*,” among others. A salute to Spanish heritage complements the classical dressage program with a performance of *doma vaquera* (country dressage or Spanish cowboy)—the riding style that has been used for hundreds of years on working cattle ranches. Rounding out the rich celebration of horsemanship is a high-energy *enganches* (carriage driving) presentation and a group grand finale performed in unison called “*Carousel*.”

Though the show is the most publicized highlight of the Royal School, horse and rider *haute-école* (high school) dressage training, education and international competition are also cornerstones of the prestigious foundation. Four-year specialty courses in horsemanship, carriage-driving and saddle- and harness-making are offered as well as training for stable and clinical assistants. Additionally, intensive two-week advanced training courses (practical and classroom) for selected amateur and professional riders are taught on the performance horses by the school’s expert instructors.

Outside of the school, some of the riders and horses compete in national and international equestrian competitions. Their most notable accomplishments are the dressage team silver medal won by Rafael Soto on Invasor and Ignacio Rambla on Oleaje at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens and a team bronze medal at the 2002 World Equestrian Games in Jerez (Soto on Invasor and Rambla on Granadero). Spanish championships were also won annually from 1994 through 1999 and again in the years 2000 and 2004. Riders and horses also serve as ambassadors to Andalusia and Spain with promotional tours abroad to perform “How the Andalusian Horses Dance.”



ABOVE: In-hand airs above the ground rehearsal as performed in "How the Andalusian Horses Dance."

LEFT: Rafael Soto, Olympian and head of riding at the school, masterfully performs *doma vaquera* (Spanish cowboy dressage), used for centuries on cattle ranches in Spain.

The Stars of the Show

There is archeological evidence that the ancestors of Spanish horses inhabited the Iberian Peninsula more than 3,000 years ago. However, the origin of the noble P.R.E. breed that stars in "How the Andalusian Horses Dance" dates back to 1567 and the reign of King Philip II. In his personal quest to create a Spanish horse in the ideal image found in centuries-old mythology, folklore and art, he ordered the royal horse master in the city of Cordoba to acquire numerous Spanish mares and stallions throughout Andalusia for selective breeding.

The King's grand undertaking to improve the Andalusian horse was heralded as a tremendous success. In the words of François Robichon de la

Guernière, the late dressage master of that era and one of the most influential writers on the art of dressage, "All writers have always given preference to the Spanish horse and considered it to be the best of all horses for the arena due to its agility, resourcefulness and natural rhythm. It has been esteemed as the most appropriate for the arena, for displays and parades, for its poise, grace and nobility; and even more suitable for war on a day of action, both for its great spirit and docility. The Spanish horse is the most fitting to be mounted by a king on occasions of triumph."

The most defining characteristics of P.R.E.s are their regal conformation, energetic yet docile temperament, willingness, resilience, a natural predisposition

for collection, exceptional extensions and elevations and great aptitude for *haute-école* dressage and airs above the ground. The breed was so revered by royalty that for centuries it was depicted in portraits of European kings and was the most highly sought-after horse in all of Europe. In keeping with the tradition of the association of Spanish horses and kings, there is a royal seating box at the end of the arena for the King of Spain and special guests to watch over the school's herd during practice, training and performances.

A Tour of the Royal School

The Royal School of Equestrian Art is in the heart of Jerez, bordered by bustling city streets. Beyond the curbside gate-



houses (now ticket offices) on *Avenida Duque de Abrantes*, the main iron gate opens through a stone wall to the expansive grounds of *Recreo de las Cadenas*.

The newly built reception area welcomes visitors with coffee, gift shops and an audio/video theater presentation of the history of Andalusian equestrian art. In keeping with the school's air of perfection, historical trees and impeccable botanical gardens draw guests from the reception area to a grand fountain at the center of the property. From there, visitors are led to the stately 19th century palace, which was originally a family residence for a prominent vintner named Don Julian Premartin Laborde. During a

thriving economy and at the peak of the boom of sherry houses in Jerez, Laborde commissioned French architect Charles Ganier (famous for designing the Paris Opera House and the Monte Carlo Casino) to design the palace in a park-like setting as his personal estate and extension of his sherry business. Upon the palace's completion in 1864, His Highness Francisco Maria de Asis (husband to the Queen of Spain) attended the inauguration and approved the distinction of placing chains at the main entry (a privilege that could be done only with royal approval) hence the name *Recreo de las Cadenas* (recreation chains). Much of the original Louis XV French-style interior design has been preserved, though the noble rooms that were once used to entertain aristocrats are now used for meetings, receptions, exhibitions, advertising and movie locations.

The Equestrian Art Museum, located in the basement of the palace, pays reverence to the centuries-old human/equine bond, particularly the cultural significance of horses in Spain. It provides visitors with an interactive educational experience about the origin and evolution of the Spanish horse and the equestrian arts. Highlighted themes of the tour include mythical horses, the history of equestrian art in the world, the history of the Royal School, *haute-école*



dressage, equestrian professions and world championship equestrian events. Located directly above the museum is the Equestrian Documentation Center, which is a resource and research area that was created in 2008. The vast collection of books and documents provides extensive information about Andalusian equestrian art and Spanish horses.

Steps down a columned staircase at the back of the palace lead to the school's outdoor arena, which is used for training and special performances. The quaint brick building perched at the far end of the arena is the Royal School's saddlery, where the master harness-maker and his apprentices preserve the age-old art of

Spanish saddle- and harness-making. So meticulous is the master that his students must first draw every piece of tack with perfection before receiving approval to press cutting tools into leather.

Adjacent to the palace is the outdoor exercise ring and the iconic indoor riding arena where "How the Andalusian Horses Dance" is performed. The deep-yellow and brilliant-white structure is typical of Andalusian architectural design. Numerous round windows adhere to the staunch environmental-sustainability policies of the foundation and also provide natural light for daily training and weekly performances. Through the flag-adorned arches at the end of the

arena and opposite the King's throne is the immaculate two-level circular tack room. Extending from the center of the tack room are five stables (with 12 stalls each) named after some of the most significant horses in the history of the school, including Ruisenor and four of the founding horses—Jerezano, Valeroso, Garboso and Vendaval. The in-house, state-of-the-art veterinarian clinic is next to the stables and is fully staffed with a team of specialists who provide all the medical care for the Royal School's horses and oversee all of the farriers' work. It includes an operating room equipped for abdominal and bone surgery, a laboratory for general and biochemical analysis,



ABOVE: The *Museo del Enganche* (Carriage Museum) in a 19th century winery blends heritage and modern technology.

LEFT: The circular, two-level tack room situated in the center of the main stables

architectural perfection, historical tradition, cultural pride, environmental stewardship, passion and warm Spanish hospitality converge to create the sophisticated elegance that is the Royal School of Equestrian Art. Whether an amateur or professional equestrian of any discipline or simply a horse admirer, one who has the privilege to visit the Royal School and experience “How the Andalusian Horses Dance” undoubtedly leaves with cherished lifelong memories.

For more information about the Royal School of Equestrian Art, visit realescuela.org, andalucia.com and cadizturismo.com. 

machines for image diagnostics, a pharmacy, intensive-care unit, a reproduction laboratory and frozen-semen bank and other features.

To honor and preserve the tradition of horse-drawn carriages, the Carriage Museum opened in 2002 across the street from the stables in a 19th-century building that was formerly a sherry winery. Twelve of the original carriages and harnesses donated by the Domecq family are on display in the main room of the museum and are equipped with interactive touch screens for visitors to access information about the origin and history of each carriage. Under the same roof with the collectible carriages, harnesses

and costumes are stabled horses. Guests can watch grooms care for them, clean tack and polish the carriages for a more in-depth equine experience.

Viva España

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Diane Barber lives in Los Angeles and is a lifestyle writer, interior designer and equestrian with an affinity for Spain. Her horse's Spanish lineage (his Arabian grandsire, Sidi Brahim, was Spain's 1976 gold medal Horse of the Year) led her to Andalusia and to the Royal School, where she has trained under the tutelage of Rafael Soto.

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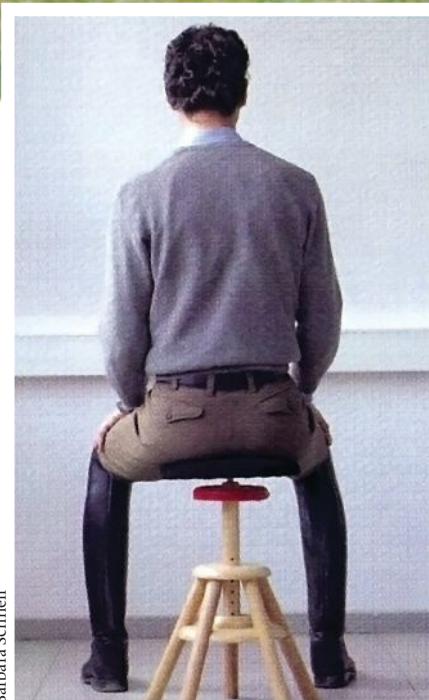
Photo: Carol Walker; Illustration: Celia Strain

IMPROVE YOUR SEAT

Part 2: Find the right exercises to improve your position.

By Isabelle von Neumann-Cosel

INTRO TR 1st 2nd 3rd 4th FEI



Last month I explained the process of recognizing, analyzing and understanding the reasons for your position problems. If you know the long and short, strong and weak, stiff and overflexible parts of your body, and if you understand the unique system of your movements on the horse, then you are ready to find your specific solutions. But choosing some helpful exercises is only the first step of a long journey; overcoming your own seat problems is a lifetime challenge. Always keep your goal in mind: to create harmony between two individual body movement systems.

A tool like this flexible Balimo chair can be helpful, but it can also create compensating movements. It's best to use one under professional supervision.

Picture-Perfect Riding

You can find a lot of advice on how to improve your seat from books and workout programs. It's common for riders to buy into a program of exercises that are



**Always keep your goal in mind:
to create harmony between two
individual body-movement systems.
Felicitas von Neumann-Cosel rides
Florenz, a 9-year-old Bavarian
Warmblood owned by Sandra Smith.**

Mary McKenna

supposed to lead to a better seat and thus better riding. But there is no such thing as five miracle exercises for every rider or just one exercise to correct a hollow back.

Indeed, not one single exercise exists to fix any problem. It is a very hard challenge to change the routine of your movements. If it comes to high-level coordination, as required in the rider's seat, your body knows more escape doors than you can imagine. The same exercise can be done in very different ways, using different muscle chains or different parts in your body for stabilization.

At first, strictly addressing a weak part in your body seems to be effective. But to address only the biggest challenge might not be the best approach. If you try to fight against your own body, your body will always find a way to fight back. Sometimes it is hard to accept your own limitations. But only a sensible, friendly approach will invite your body to cooperate.

The Fitness Factor

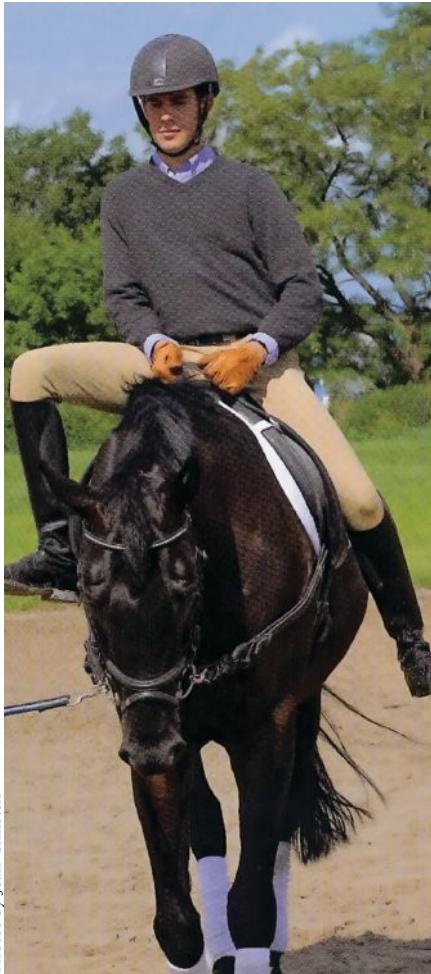
Riding is a lifetime sport. The top riders worldwide are much older than most

of the best athletes in other disciplines. That is one of the reasons why the fitness factor in our sport is definitely underrated. Good riding requires a certain level of fitness: To stabilize your own body against gravity and flight forces on a moving horse is not an easy job. If riders are not fit enough, their muscles easily get tired and the muscle-control system switches into stress mode. Under stress, your brain always comes up with the same old solutions for well-known problems. There is no energy left for trying new strategies. When muscles get



1. A slow change from a very forward seat ...

2. to a less-forward seat and eventually ...



tired, they lose their elasticity and get more tense before they finally give up. Feeling and fine coordination are no longer possible.

If you lack flexibility, strength and endurance, it can be helpful to train in a gym under professional supervision. Training for a stable core, dynamic stability of your spine and better balance will be helpful in the saddle. There are also some special workout programs for riders or specific body training tools. But you will not learn better riding just from a balance board, a balancing (Balimo) chair or an artificial plastic horse. In Germany, there is an old saying: "You can only learn riding by riding." But in my eyes, riding is not even enough, I'm afraid. Experience doesn't lead automatically to quality. Poor riders don't turn miraculously into good riders simply by riding more. As far as I can see, you can learn good riding only by riding well. One of those rare perfect moments, when every part of your body just falls into place and the horse asks in his body language: "What do you want me to do—I'll try," teaches you more than 20 average riding lessons. To improve the chance for those moments, you have to practice better basics. Here are your next steps:

The bicycle exercise, as demonstrated above, helps a rider find positive muscle tension, which is neither negative tension nor completely relaxed muscles.



3. a dressage seat, teaches you how to feel when you ...

4. have placed your weight correctly in sitting trot.

The Warm-Up

Knowing you have a problem with your position is not enough—you have to feel that problem before you can solve it. If you have a habit of pulling up your heels, it feels normal. Only moving your heels up and down will help you to feel the difference so that you can correct the problem. Dare to move in the saddle and find different positions for the parts of your body.

For instance, you may start in walk and move your upper body backward and forward until you get a new feeling for the real upright position. Never forget the key role of your pelvis position: Only an upright pelvis in middle position—between the extremes of a round lower back and a hollow back—allows an upright upper body. If you want to correct your position, you have to start from your seat bones upward instead of trying to correct the position from the head downward.

Try this: In the rising trot, each time you come down into the saddle, sit in a slightly different spot while keeping your knees and shoulders in place. Even if you just try to sit a little bit more to the left once and the next time to the right, you may develop a better feeling

for the correct middle, which is exactly over the spine of the horse.

Body awareness can and must be trained. Some parts of our body are very well represented in our brain. Others are not. A big part of our brain just deals with the movement of our hands, but our back seems to be less important for our perception. Normally, we don't notice our back until it hurts. To become more aware of your back's position requires a lot of training.

One helpful exercise is to get your feet out of the stirrups. When the feet give no more information to our inner body balance, the perception sensors in the pelvis just take over. In the dressage seat, our balance depends much more on the pelvis than on the stirrup contact. Without stirrups, you immediately feel your back position much better.

Moving exercises for your legs, such as the bicycle exercise, rotation exercises for your upper body or other controlled movements for legs, shoulders and arms can be part of your daily warm-up routine. But you should know and feel why you choose and use a special exercise. The challenge is to create your specific warm-up routine together with the program for the horse. In the end, both

of you should be relaxed. Relaxation in terms of proper classical training means a positive muscle tension—neither negative tension nor completely relaxed muscles. Only positive tension allows your body to properly feel and your muscles to work. Under negative tension, your movements become cramped. In contrast, if you are totally relaxed, you will feel like a couch potato instead of an athlete.

Move, Feel and Find Out

There is only one person in the world who can find out which exercises you find most helpful: You. If you have parts of your body that are stiff, you need movements in a good rhythm to get relaxed. If you've created bad habits from riding without a good trainer for a long time, then find a trainer who can offer exercises that help you correct the mistakes you're making. It's important to understand that when you learn a new movement, the raw form always comes before the fine form. Sometimes it can be helpful to learn a new exercise on the longe line. But a lot of exercises can be included in your daily riding so long as your horse is safe enough to be ridden without stirrups or with long reins.

Common Seat Problems and New Solutions

Problem: You pull your knees and heels up.

Solution: Ride with extremely short stirrups in a two-point position. In this position, you are not able to pull your heels up, and afterward your muscle memory will help you remember how deep knees and heels function in order to stabilize your seat.

Problem: In the rising trot, you have a stiff, straight upper body without forward tendency.

Solution: Without stirrups, post the trot from your hips with your legs hanging down. Do not grab with your lower legs. This is what causes a stiff upper body.

Problem: Your hands are not steady enough.

Solution: Hold a whip or a small stick under your bent thumbs. In a correct upright position, the stick will not disturb the rein contact and your hands will be upright and calm. Your horse will love it.

Problem: You struggle with the sitting trot.

Solution: Switch from posting to sitting trot with every stride. Then, from one step sitting to two steps posting and so forth. If you get tense in the sitting trot, start to rise again. Even if it's only for one step, your back as well as the horse's back can relax.

Steps to Exercising Effectively

- Control your breathing by doing it properly: inhale through your nose, exhale through your mouth. Be sure to give yourself enough time for breathing out.
- First comes the unrefined form of the new movement, then comes the refined form.
- Be aware of a correct middle position of the pelvis: This is possible when you find the balance between a round back and a hollow back.
- A stable core allows the refined coordination of arms, hands, legs and feet.
- Good position is always the result of correct, fine-tuned movements.
- You cannot just hold a good position because you will become stiff. Instead, you have to regain it again and again.

Working on your own seat requires clear focus. You cannot train the horse and work on special position lessons at the same time. But the good thing is that when your seat gets better, the horse will show it, and after a while, you will be able to fit an exercise into your riding whenever you need it.

Solutions Must Fit the Problems

There are many different position problems and even different reasons for the same problem. One common

problem is leaning too far back, which means the rider will always be behind the movement. Leaning back seems to give the upper body more strength, like using a lever. But leaning backward just blocks the two backs of the rider and horse. Meanwhile, it is an open invitation for the horse to lean heavily on the bit. To find out the reasons for this bad habit, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Are you looking down all the time?
2. Are you always trying to push the horse forward with your pelvis?
3. Do you have weak abdominal muscles?
4. Does your horse have the tendency to lean on the bit?

5. Do you have very long legs and a short upper body? Leaning back may be an attempt for more control.

6. Do you have an overly flexible, unstable core? This often happens if you have a long gap between your hips and thorax.

The solution always has to fit the source of the problem. In this case, to create a better seat with more forward tendency, it is important to think of the key role of the pelvis position. The main goal is a better steady contact with the seat bones.

The interaction between your seat bones and the back of your horse supports your ability to sit upright. You will see: If it's correct, it's easy! 



Isabelle von Neumann-Cosel is the sister of well-known U.S. dressage rider Felicitas von Neumann-Cosel and the cousin of Susanne von Dietze, author of *Balance in Movement*. Isabelle works as a journalist, author, dressage rider and trainer with a special interest in seat position and the functioning of the aids for riders on every level. She and her cousin co-authored *Rider & Horse, Back to Back* and directed several DVDs.

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TAKING THE LEAD

George Williams and Charlotte Bredahl-Baker bring inspirational backgrounds to the USEF Youth Dressage program.

By Betsy LaBelle

George Williams and Charlotte Bredahl-Baker, recently appointed coaches of the USEF Youth Dressage Program, are determined to help the next generation of top dressage riders navigate their road to success. Williams, head U.S. Dressage youth coach, and Bredahl-Baker, assistant youth coach, have extensive knowledge and skills in developing all aspects of youth competition achievement—ranging from understanding a horse's biomechanics and day-to-day training pressures to working within team competitions to

seeking sponsorships.

The recently remodeled youth program seeks to build a base of youth dressage athletes by developing, educating and inspiring young riders. The 2015 program encompasses a wide variety of initiatives, taking place both on U.S. soil and abroad. Williams and Bredahl-Baker will lead initiatives such as Outreach Clinics, a European tour, High Intensity Training Sessions and Junior/Young Rider Clinics.

From left: Charlotte Bredahl-Baker and George Williams bring fresh approaches to educating young dressage riders.

Outreach Clinics will be held in areas of the country that are considered hot spots for youth dressage or in areas that are identified as needing dressage promotion. While the format of each clinic might differ, they will be held over the course of two days and will include a lecture by a featured clinician each day. The Young Rider European Tour is geared toward promoting and exposing elite-level U.S. Young Riders to international competition. The two Young Riders selected for the tour in 2015 are Catherine Chamberlain and Ayden Uhlir. High Intensity Training Sessions provide comprehensive instruction for top-level Pony Riders, Juniors and Young Riders. These sessions will be held by Williams and/or Bredahl-Baker and will include education components, such as a veterinary session, fitness session, sports-psychology session and saddlery session. Finally, the Junior/Young Rider clinic series, officially known as the Platinum Performance/USDF Junior/Young Rider Clinics, operates in partnership with the USDF to provide a clinic in every USDF region in each calendar year. These clinics, which receive additional funding from The Dressage Foundation, aim to provide educational opportunities for young riders and will be led by Williams, Bredahl-Baker and other highly respected instructors.

An application process was used for the U.S. Dressage youth coach position, and Williams and Bredahl-Baker applied when it was posted in 2014. According to USEF Director of Dressage, Hallye Griffin, several high-quality applicants were interviewed by a selection panel consisting of other USEF dressage coaches, USEF Dressage and High

Performance Committee members, USEF staff and a U.S. Olympic Committee representative. Throughout the selection process, it became obvious that the USEF Youth Dressage Program would benefit greatly if two individuals could serve in coaching roles due to the size of the country and the scope of the envisioned program. "Williams and Bredahl-Baker have already proven to be a terrific combination and we know that they will continue to lead our USEF Dressage

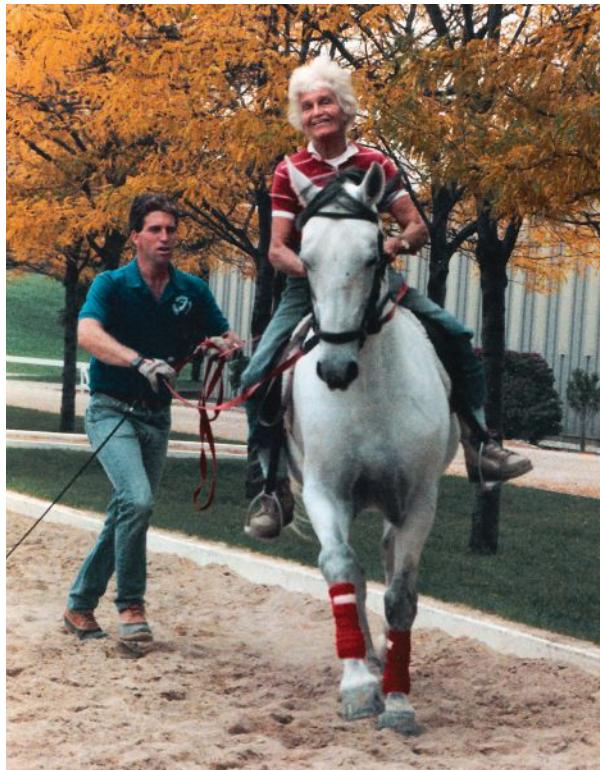
with their mother. "I don't remember who put me on my first horse or pony, but it was my sister Betsy, who was 11 years older than I am, in particular, who encouraged me to ride," Williams says. Betsy, having competed at Madison Square Garden in New York with her hunters, let the young Williams ride her fancy Welsh pony, Bonnie, and taught her brother the basics. Later, she imported two Connemara ponies from Ireland, and Williams, unaware that the

two ponies were unbroken, tacked one up and rode it down the driveway. "In those days, I loved to gallop through the woods on my family's property. At one point when I was quite young, our blacksmith said to my mother, as I careened out of the woods back to the barnyard, 'Don't worry, the finesse will come later.' And he was right."

Through his family, Williams' interest in dressage started early on. He easily adapted to the discipline because of his participation in the U.S. Pony Club rallies, which in his region included eventing. "I loved the training process, how the dressage changes a horse for the better both mentally and physically."

Although the North American Junior/Young Rider Championships did not exist when Williams was growing up, he attained his first Prix St. Georges

horse, Fleury, when he was 19 years old. Fleury was a New Zealand Thoroughbred he acquired from Meg Douglas Hamilton, a pioneer of new technologies in the breeding industry who went on to establish Hamilton Farms, a top U.S. breeding farm. Williams rode Fleury in early observation clinics with U.S. Coach Col. Bengt Ljungquist. "Fleury was a delightful soul and rather difficult



George Williams' mother, Mary (mounted), was a life-long rider and one of his biggest supporters.

Youth Program toward long-term success," Griffin says.

Williams' Own Long Road

The youngest of nine children, Williams grew up in a large family, where horses had been a part of the family long before he was born. All his siblings rode when they were young and two sisters later became local riding instructors along

Courtesy, Roberta Williams

to ride. To keep supple, truly on the bit and through was sometimes beyond my skills at that time. I was often discouraged after riding a dressage test. When I look back at the old photos I think, *no wonder*, because the photos aren't pretty. I wasn't sitting quite right yet, and the horse was never truly underneath himself behind. It's amazing I stuck with it." Williams continues, though, with his mother, Mary, as his biggest supporter. "She would give me pep talks and encourage me to continue training. She wouldn't let me even think of giving up," he says. "One of the most valuable lessons she taught me was that of perseverance and to have the will to improve. It always pays off."

He often would watch his mother teach lessons at her farm and accompany her when she had the opportunity to ride in clinics hosted by the American Dressage Institute (ADI) in Saratoga, New York, and throughout the area. As a result, he was exposed to some of the living dressage legends of the time, including Ljungquist, Gustav Niblaeus, Hans Handler and Franz Rochowansky.

Williams' mother was one who fueled his passion for dressage. She was seen as a slight woman with white hair and twinkling blue eyes who mirrored Katherine Hepburn in spirit. An extraordinary woman, she was 76 when she rode her first piaffe.

After high school, Williams traveled to Germany to continue dressage instruction and to more formally study dressage at Reitinstutute Egon von Neindorff in Karlsruhe, Germany, where he earned his bronze medal. He recalls his training: "Riding at the school in Germany had its ups and downs. One moment you would feel good about your riding, the next you would realize how little you knew and how far you had to go. Even though over the years my instructors were always positive, I went through periods where I thought

I'd only be a good teacher and other times that I'd only be able to take problem horses in training. Slowly, though, it all started to come together."

He continues, "In the late 70s, I had the opportunity to ride and compete a wonderful horse by the name of Rahel who, instead of the usual Thoroughbred dressage horse, was a 17-hand Trakehner mare. She was owned by Margot Kagen of Long Island, New York." Together they were the AHSA First Level National Champions in 1979 and Rahel was USDF Horse of the Year at Second Level in 1980.

"There is nothing like a good horse to make you feel better about yourself," Williams says.

He fondly remembers those who have guided his journey. "I've had many mentors in my life and they've all influenced my life in some manner. But I would have to say that along with my parents, there are three who truly stand out. One is Egon Von Neindorff, partly because I rode with him at such an impressionable stage of my life. Another is Karl Mikolka, who I rode with and alongside for more than 20 years, and the third was Klaus Balkenhol. I use the things they taught me every day in my teaching and training." He also credits long-time friend Kathy Connelly for being invaluable. "She was my eyes on the ground—something no serious competitor should ever be without."

Dressage Today Archives



At 19 years old, Williams acquired his first Prix St. Georges horse, Fleury, and rode the New Zealand Thoroughbred in clinics with Col. Bengt Ljungquist.

An accomplished International Grand Prix competitor widely renowned in his field, Williams rode Chuck and Joanne Smith's black, floppy-eared Westfalen mare, Rocher, who was USDF Horse of the Year in 2003 at the Grand Prix level.

They competed in numerous European CDIs including Oldenburg, Munich, Dortmund, Lingen and Wiesbaden as well as the European Championships at Hickstead and the FEI World Cup Dressage Final in Gothenburg, Sweden. Williams and Rocher helped the U.S. team earn a bronze medal at the 2005 CHIO Aachen and achieving the title of 2005 Collecting Gaits Farm/USEF Grand Prix National Champion. They won the Grand Prix at Dressage at Devon an unprecedented three times and their Grand Prix Freestyle score at Dressage at Devon still stands as the highest after 10 years.

They were also 16th in the World Rankings, which, at the time, few Americans had achieved. In 2005, Williams was the co-recipient of the William Steinkraus Equestrian of the Year award.

Williams, having brought numerous horses and riders up the levels, is a much sought-after clinician who brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to his new role as the U.S. Dressage youth coach. One of his students, Laura Noyes, was a U.S. Young Rider who qualified and competed twice in the Young Rider World Cup in Frankfurt, Germany. She also was a successful under 25-year-old Grand Prix Brentina Cup rider.

Another top competitor Williams oversees is Angela Hecker Jackson, who is currently preparing the mare, Allure, owned by KC Dunn/Timbach Farm, for the Developing Grand Prix. "It is so difficult to find a trainer committed to, and who has the understanding of classical dressage," Jackson shares. "Thank you, George, for being a trainer and teacher who is patient in the education of a horse and rider not only physically but also mentally and a trainer who follows the Training Scale and not just teaches a trick to show off. I am so happy you are taking the time to share your knowledge with us."

FEI 3* judge Bill Warren, who has worked with Williams on and off over the course of 30 years, expressed his appreciation for his teaching style. "George Williams' approach in his teaching is simply straightforward, honest work. There are no gimmicks. In the many years that he has helped me, what sticks in my mind as a rider is to be persistent and consistent but always fair to the horse. George's depth of knowledge and devotion to the classical principles has been an inspiration to me in developing horses through to the Grand Prix." Williams has brought a number of Adult Amateurs and Juniors from lower levels to the upper levels.

Bredahl-Baker's Courageous Path

Bredahl-Baker was born and raised in Denmark, where she began riding at the age of 9. She was the only one in her family interested in horses, but that didn't stop her from pursuing the sport wholeheartedly. "No one in my family was really into horses, but I was obsessed with horses from the time I was 8. At 9, I started taking lessons in exchange for cleaning stalls at a riding school near Copenhagen." When she was 12, she and her family had to move to a small island of only 10,000 people because her father received a promotion as a police chief. She started knocking on farmers' doors to see if they would let her ride their draft or driving horses. "Many of those horses were barely broken to ride, and I didn't have a saddle. I rode mostly with bareback pads and fell off many times," she says.

Without a lot of money to spend on horses, lessons were few and far between for Bredahl-Baker. Her parents, busy trying to support a family of four, watched their daughter's grit and passion grow throughout the years.

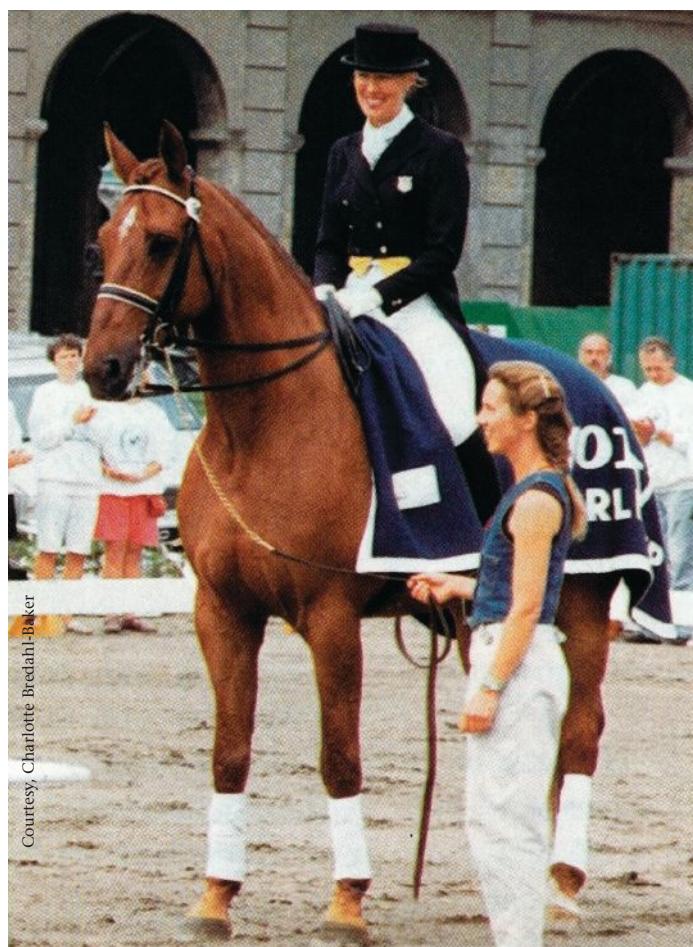
She worked after school at a farm where they bred and raised trotters. During that experience, she learned to drive and even got a license to drive on the track. "This made me quite good with long lines and it was a great

Bredahl-Baker and Monsieur, who she developed with the help of Hilda Gurney, won the 1992 Volvo World Cup Qualifier in Copenhagen, Denmark.

tool later with piaffe and passage," she says. She broke a 2-year-old of her own when she was 15 and managed to do basic dressage and jumping. However, the horse was very talented at jumping and she sold him as a jumper since she didn't have the nerve for the big fences.

Bredahl-Baker's eventual move to the United States presented its own variety of challenges and learning experiences. "When I was about 19 years old, I moved to California and worked as a groom at a very nice place called Bell Canyon Equestrian Center," she recalls.

"My English wasn't very good, but I worked my way up to assistant trainer and then manager over the next three years. I was in charge of 110 horses and had to learn to run two-ring dressage shows on a monthly basis. I learned a tremendous amount during that time, but had very little time to ride. After about two years I quit as manager, but stayed on as trainer."



Courtesy, Charlotte Bredahl-Baker

Bredahl-Baker also formed a partnership with a Danish *bereiter* to import Danish horses. "The first horse he sent to me was not much of a mover but had a great temperament," she says. "He was trained to about First Level, and one of my students bought him for his great mind. His name was Copenhagen. After my student bought him, she had four children. Copenhagen stayed in training with me. Since he was the only horse I had in long-term training, I was determined that he was going to be my first Grand Prix horse. With the help of Hilda Gurney, I trained him to Grand Prix and it was a great learning experience."

She continues: "During this time, I also had gotten a gangly 5-year-old gelding in Denmark in a partnership. My partner paid \$10,000 for the horse and I did the training. Nobody liked the horse much, and after two years, I asked my partner if I could keep him through the 1992 Olympics if I paid his expenses."

Her partner agreed and she continued to work with the horse, named Monsieur, with the help of Gurney. During this time, Bredahl-Baker took monthly lessons, as she didn't own a trailer and had to catch a ride.

After placing third at Gladstone in 1990, Bredahl-Baker received a grant to train and compete in Europe and spent two summers training with Herbert Rehbein. In 1992, she rode on the bronze-medal-winning Olympic team in Barcelona, with Monsieur.

In 1993, she also received a grant to compete in Europe and was based at Conrad Schumacher's stable outside Frankfurt, Germany. "During those three years, I was able to show at all the biggest shows, including Aachen, Wiesbaden, Stuttgart and Rotterdam," she says.

"Aside from the Olympics, my favorite show was in Copenhagen, where



From left: Natalie Pai on Fritz San Tino, Charlotte Bredahl-Baker, Ayden Uhlir and Rachel Chowanec at Diamante Farm in Wellington, Florida.

I won the World Cup qualifier in front of my family. It was held at the Danish castle called Christiansborg. What an unbelievable feeling to see the American flag go up while the American national anthem played and my entire Danish family watched."

According to the agreement with her partner, Monsieur would be for sale after the Olympics, but it turned out that nobody else could ride him. "We had nine good years at Grand Prix before he was retired at age 19. During those years I received help in clinics from Robert Dover, Klaus Balkenhol and Guenter Seidel. I still have Monsieur who's turning 35 this year. He's my horse of a lifetime and was meant to be mine."

During the time she competed Monsieur, Bredahl-Baker also formed a partnership with a Danish friend and her 4-year-old Danish Warmblood named Lugano. "A year later I bought my partner out for \$10,000. Lugano was very talented and won every class he entered at Intermediaire I. He was also Intermediaire II USDF Horse of the Year. In 1997 we won a team silver medal at the North American Championship."

Unfortunately though, he only

lasted one season at Grand Prix before he had some soundness issues. "When both Monsieur and Lugano retired, I took time out to focus on my judging career," she says. "I started judging in 1985, but wanted to eventually become an international judge."

"In 2006 I found myself back in the ring with two wonderful horses, and spent the winter in Wellington, Florida. One of the horses was Komo, trained by Carol Plough, who sadly and suddenly passed away. I showed Komo in the try-outs for the World Games and we ended up sixth in the Grand Prix standings. My other partnership horse, Eskada, scored well in Intermediaire I and qualified for Gladstone for the second time."

Bredahl-Baker is currently a 4* judge and has judged across the world at various international-level competitions. She is also currently competing the 9-year-old gelding Rivendall at Prix St. Georges. During the 2015 Las Vegas World Cup, together with Jan Ebeling, she rode a Grand Prix *pas de deux* on her 10-year-old mare, Chanel.

For more information about Williams, Bredahl-Baker and new opportunities for young dressage riders, visit usef.org. 

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Allen Kalchik and Lola have qualified for this year's Region 5 Championships and the Arizona State Championships.

Courtesy, Alex Porter

MY EQUINE RENAISSANCE REVIVAL

By Allen Kalchik

So what made you want a Lipizzan?" If I had a \$5 bill for each time I've been asked that since buying my Lipizzan mare, Arcola, I'd have a significant chunk of my next show fees already paid. It isn't always a loaded question. I get that. Sometimes it's simply asked by curious family members and friends. They're the non-horsey people in my life for whom "Lipizzan" conveys images of uniformed riders aboard shining white stallions, dancing and leaping together. It's a perception based on what they've seen on PBS, in an old Disney movie or, most likely, in the form of a glitzy touring show that visited their town. "Oh, I know those horses," they'll say. "I saw their show as a kid. You do *that*? Impressive!"

In those situations, I appreciate their interest but tell them the showing I do is called Training and First Level dressage and probably isn't what they're imagining. I explain that this is the foundation for executing more complicated and entertaining moves in the future. I stress the fact that this takes time.

But when the question "What made you want a Lipizzan?" comes from a fellow

equestrian who knows what Training and First Level dressage entails and is as immersed in it as I am, it can come across as slightly accusatory. I don't know whether it's the timing or the tone of the question. But many times there is the hint of a suggestion that there's something not quite right about my breed choice.

I suspect what they're really asking is *why*. Why would someone who is actively attempting to move up the levels, with a decent horse-shopping budget and in regular lessons with a great trainer, set himself up for a conformational challenge to overcome from the start? Why, they wonder, wouldn't he just buy a nice warmblood? It's so much easier to

Since Kalchik purchased Lola, he has become an eager proponent of the Lipizzan breed.

succeed in the show ring on a horse that is a naturally high-scoring mover, a horse that's bred for the job of modern dressage. Lipizzans, they might presume, are cavalry mounts held over from another age and time.

The implication, I sometimes feel, is that those of us who opt to learn and compete on baroque breeds have attached so much romantic significance to our partners that we're viewing this warmblood-dominated sport through a venetian curtain. Medieval fantasy rules, my dressage-show friends may be suggesting. Honest evaluation of the discipline takes a back seat.

"I feel 450 years of living history under my fingers whenever I touch her hide." That's something a Lipizzan owner shared, shortly after I bought my mare. Is that the kind of answer my fellow competitors expect from me? Or maybe something along the line of, "I swell with pride as I imagine myself performing our passage before the crowned heads of Austria in the Winter Palace." Perhaps they think I'm making a classical statement of some kind. I sometimes sense that, at the very least, they'd like me to confirm the realization of a romantic equine ideal. As one of my barnmates, who recently bought a P.R.E. gelding put it, "Baroque horses are just different. They're living works of art."

I can't honestly say that any of those perceptions drove my own horse search. I do appreciate that, for many Lipizzan and other baroque horse owners, they've been enamored with their preferred breeds since long before they ever bought one or more of them. But a longtime baroque attraction, however common it may be, doesn't figure into my answer. The simplest truth is that I wanted a dres-

Courtesy LastWinn Photography



sage-capable horse that was shorter than most warmbloods, sturdy, smart and generally sound and tractable. I wanted to have fun and I wanted to feel safe.

As a male in my early 50s who's dabbled in dressage lessons since the mid '90s and who showed for the first time in 2013, I was horse shopping with some defined short-term goals in mind. I wanted to find a mount on which to earn my USDF bronze medal and to try to qualify for regional and state championships as I progress up the levels. I wanted to participate in clinics and to put together a freestyle, to show more frequently and maybe compete out of state. But after severely fracturing my tibia in May 2013, coming off my huge and complicated Hanoverian just weeks after making our Training Level debut, I wasn't interested in pursuing my goals on another large and big-moving horse.

After selling the Hanoverian and rehabbing my leg, I began online horse shopping in earnest, early in the fall of 2013. I applied height, age, price and temperament parameters to my searches that led to a lot of baroque types popping up in my results. I looked into several different breeds and crosses and scoured the Lipizzan listings with increasing curiosity. I contacted the handful of Lipizzan riders and enthusiasts I knew, seeking

their feedback and I liked what I heard.

"They have almost a built-in metronome," one breeder told me. "What you sacrifice in flashy gaits, they more than make up for in balance and regularity. They're old souls." Another acquaintance raved about the Lipizzan brain, their willingness to try and their loyalty. I heard praises for the breed's reputation for soundness and for having great feet. And, overall, Lipizzan prices were more reasonable than some of the other breeds I was considering.

The negatives? Frequently their height. I wanted something in the 15.2- to 16-hand range. But many of the Lipizzans popping up for sale were much shorter, even as small as 14.2 and 14.3. Another issue I encountered while shopping was difficulty finding a suitable gelding. I also wanted a young horse with a good start under saddle. Because I didn't have much experience developing green horses, I knew that my trainer, Cyndi Jackson, would be very involved in bringing the horse along.

Yet as I began searching, there appeared to be only Lipizzan mares in the age and training range I was seeking. I wasn't sure I wanted to deal with a mare. Ungelded colts were available, so were some aged males. I was unwilling to take the risk with any of those.



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United States Lipizzan Federation



Courtesy, EastWinn Photography

Kalchik wanted a dressage-capable horse that was shorter than most warmbloods, sturdy, smart and generally sound and tractable.

Because Lipizzans are rare and the market is limited, I expanded my search to include both genders. Eventually, I flew from my home in Arizona to Tempel Lipizzans, outside of Chicago, to try two of its youngsters for sale. The one I was most interested in was Arcola, a 15.3-hand 2007 mare with an extremely pronounced forehead. She looked to be a good mover and a steady, nonspooky type in her videos.

I tried four available horses on that trip, but Arcola was the only one I rode twice. I immediately felt connected to her. I liked her calmness. We seemed to have a similar understanding of the aids and the rein connection. I was still in a knee brace at the time and felt very safe on her broad back. I tried enough sitting trot to burst out laughing at how easy she was to sit, especially compared to the horse on which I'd smashed my leg six months earlier. To say I was smitten would be an understatement. She felt like mine.

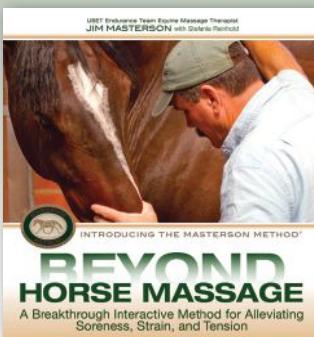
But I wasn't immediately convinced. I'd set out to find something reliable and sturdy, and she met the criteria. I loved her as an individual, but at that point, I balked due to my

unfamiliarity with the breed. A voice in my head worried that baroque gaits weren't competitive. Maybe her back was too long, her legs too short, her noble profile too extreme. I flew home and discussed the trip with my partner. We decided together that her three good gaits and my sense of security trumped dynamic movement. My trainer agreed. We made an offer, ordered a prepurchase exam and in December 2013, "Lola" came to Arizona to be my show horse.

In my first real show season, with Cyndi Jackson's help, Lola and I qualified for the 2015 Region 5 Championships at Training Level. We also qualified for the 2015 Arizona State Championships at both Training and First Levels. We're working toward qualifying at First Level for regionals, and are preparing a First Level freestyle to show this fall. We've ridden in clinics with Jan Ebeling, Christine Traurig, Niki Clarke and Conrad Schumacher. Lola has been a willing and capable partner in every way. Cyndi is convinced that, as a team we can realistically aim for a USDF medal level higher than bronze.

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As it turns out, I've become an eager breed proponent. Lola has so many wonderful qualities that I want to share the Lipizzan joy with others. I've gotten very involved with our registry and returned to Tempel Farms last fall for the annual USLF Symposium. I carry a USLF banner and brochures with me to shows and clinics and I've done some sleuthing among available Lipizzans on behalf of horse-shopping friends and acquaintances. Ambassadorship was something I never anticipated, but its rewards far outweigh any extra pressure I might feel when we're out and about.

So there you have the simple answer to why I chose a Lipizzan. I wasn't trying to fulfill a childhood dream or play out a Spanish Riding School fantasy. I had no romantic attachment or historical ideal in mind. I certainly did not intend to establish myself as somehow more classical than other dressage riders by coming down centerline on a Lipizzan. Yet here I am, taking lessons, competing regularly and enjoying all of the innate qualities that this noble breed possesses. Ask me, instead, what makes me want to *keep* my Lipizzan, and I can go on for hours.

I wanted something shorter than my previous horse. I wanted sturdy. I wanted a good brain and good feet. I wanted to progress in dressage at a steady pace on a willing partner. I wanted to participate in lessons, shows and clinics without worrying about behavioral issues. My only intention was to learn, feel secure and have fun. Lola is everything I hoped for and more. ☺



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The 2015 Baroque Annual Gallery



A Friesian basks in water during the summer.



Frank Sorge - And.nl



The 2015 Baroque Annual Gallery

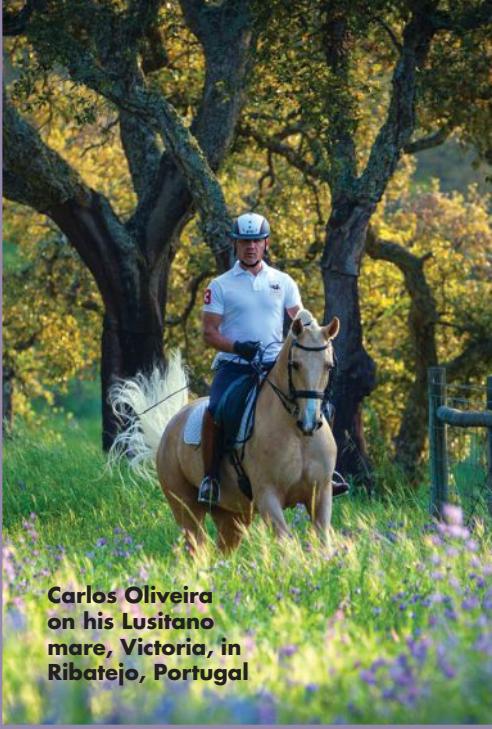


John Borys Photography

Tempel Lipizzans, based in Old Mill Creek, Illinois, in the snow



Courtesy, Royal Andalusian School of Equestrian Art



**Carlos Oliveira
on his Lusitano
mare, Victoria, in
Ribatejo, Portugal**



**Horses and
riders outside
the palace
at the Royal
Andalusian
School of
Equestrian Art
in Jerez, Spain**

The 2015 Baroque Annual Gallery



Copper highlights
glow in the mane
of a Friesian horse.

Katya Druz - And.nl



A Friesian foal
takes a curious look
at the world.

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Selene AC, a P.R.E.
Andalusian mare,
owned and ridden by
Linda deWilde-Petersen
of Cedar Creek Farm in
Enumclaw, Washington.





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DRESSAGE ON A BUDGET

By Andrea Reynes

Before Lendon Gray became an Olympic rider, she couldn't afford a place to stay when she was training with the masters of dressage. She slept in the backseat of her car in a fellow rider's backyard while she trained with Col. Bengt Ljunquist, former coach of the U.S.

Debra Reinhardt views training costs as tuition for an equestrian education.



Olympic Dressage Team. Even after her international success, Gray said she still struggled financially.

Riders know that dressage is expensive, whether it is a career or a hobby. Sustaining a dressage passion for the Adult Amateur or young rider at any training or financial level may mean sacrificing other things in life. Luckily though, many amateur riders discover ways to creatively finance their training and show schedules. Gray says there are opportunities to get an excellent education, equipment and even some services at a discount or for free.

Education

To support a rider's education, Gray suggests attending an upper-level dressage event, such as Dressage at Devon, to study the riders. She recommends bringing binoculars for close analysis. Observation is a simple opportunity to learn effective and ineffective riding and handling techniques.

At the barn, Gray recommends creating a support system to offer feedback and advice. She says, "It doesn't take a highly trained equestrian to see if the horse's shoulder during the shoulder-in is on a separate track. It's about people helping each other." Gray also recommends placing a mirror in a riding arena as a useful tool to check position and carriage.

Sometimes, common errors that are difficult for a rider to see or feel are simple to spot from the ground even for an inexperienced horseperson. A rider can ask a friend or parent to check for overtracking and proper connection on the bit. If a parent, spouse or friend can attend a riding lesson occasionally, he or she may be helpful during training sessions without a professional. Gray confirms, "I've known many a parent or spouse who, because they observe at a riding lesson, can help when the rider is working on training at home."

Gray also points out that a big-name trainer is not necessarily what a rider may need. A lower-level rider may not need a Grand Prix coach to show her or him how to create bend on a circle, she explains. For some riders, a trainer at a lower level, who presumably, is less expensive, can be a good match.

In addition to barn communities, the Internet can be a vehicle to connect with other dressage enthusiasts. There are Facebook groups, Gray notes, and many breed organizations that have online forums. If a rider isn't taking regular lessons or doesn't have direct access to a trainer, posting videos for feedback can be a helpful tool. Joining an online network is a great way to improve a rider's knowledge of the sport and also provides the opportunity to connect with fellow equestrians.

Boarding

If a horse owner has land, moving from boarding at a stable to boarding at home is an option to reduce fees. Linda Byrd, an Adult Amateur on a budget, has a modestly sized home on three acres in Frederick County, Maryland. The location is generally quite expensive, so when her horses' board cost more than her mortgage, Byrd decided to move her two horses to her property.

For Byrd, the decision to ride means sacrificing her expenses on clothing. Instead, she invests any money she would spend on her everyday apparel in her riding clothes. "My most expensive pants are breeches and the most expensive shoes I own are my paddock and tall boots," she says.

Although Byrd is careful with her budget, she also admits that there are certain supplies that she refuses to skimp on, particularly saddles and supplements for her horses. Still, Byrd has had good luck with an inexpensive double bridle that isn't super fancy, but is made of quality leather.

Like Gray, Byrd emphasizes the benefits of connecting with an equine community on the Internet. She mentions regional equine bulletin-board networks for referrals to affordable quality services, such as farriers and chiropractors.

Another amateur horse owner who keeps horses on her property is Carrie Ahonen. When Ahonen returned from



Judy Wright decided to take in three boarders at home to cover her own horse's training expenses.

Andrea Reyne



Mary Mansfield recalls sacrificing luxuries in the past to make her show budget feasible.

Andrea Reyne's

military deployment in Iraq four years ago, she decided to pursue her lifelong dream of horseback riding. She and her husband found horse property in Frederick, Maryland, for a good price and now Ahonen has a 10-acre farm where she cares for five horses.

She says that the transition from boarding to caring for her own horses was more time-consuming but ultimately easier to manage financially. In addition to home boarding, Ahonen also saves money by frequenting online-sales websites to find good deals. She recommends using coupons for feed, tack and grooming products. These coupons are usually found in local equestrian magazines, websites or feed stores.

Judy Wright, of West Newbury, Massachusetts, had to think about how she was going to afford board with full training for her Lusitano stallion, Tome, currently showing Intermediaire I. To cover the costs of having Tome in training with a professional, Wright decided to take in three boarders at her home.

For the dressage enthusiast, justifying the costs of showing is a big psychological factor in determining a riding budget. Debra Reinhardt views training costs as tuition for an equestrian education. She recently won the Connecticut Vista Vintage Award, for horses 18 years old and above, at Fourth Level with her 25-year-old Danish Warmblood, Satch. In addition to training for 26 years with Vicky Hammers O'Neill, Reinhardt finds auditing clinics with top riders to be a good investment.

When she observed Steffen Peters and Scott Hessler at a trainers conference in Florida, she said she was able to apply the advice and instruction to her own riding at home.

Because Reinhardt has an older horse on the show circuit, she is very cautious of how she spends her time and her money. "If I know the footing isn't good, I don't go to an event because I can't risk any part of the horse's legs getting pulled," Reinhardt explains.

Even prestigious, expensive shows

Besides doing all the feeding and cleaning herself, Wright also arranged an informal co-op system with her neighbors to share tools such as a post-hole digger, tractor and other equipment that she doesn't need frequently.

Wright is also actively engaged with her local equestrian community to grow her dressage education. She frequently volunteers as a ring steward at the New England Dressage Association (NEDA) shows. She loves the opportunity to observe different riding and training techniques.

Showing

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can be accessible and affordable with determination. Elizabeth Hattenburg, a lieutenant for the Montgomery County police in Gaithersburg, Maryland, qualified for the 2014 U.S. Dressage Finals in Kentucky. She hauled her horse, Chopin, 10 hours to the Finals, along with her own shavings, hay and feed. She was also her own groom, which allowed for preshow bonding with her horse.

Hotel prices can vary, but Hattenburg recommends finding one near the show with a breakfast buffet to save money on food. Because many show prices are nonnegotiable, such as stall and class fees, staying on a budget can be challenging. Therefore, it is necessary to find opportunities to save money outside of the show grounds. Hattenburg estimated that the total cost of the Finals for her ranged from \$1,500 to \$2,000, including gas and hotels.

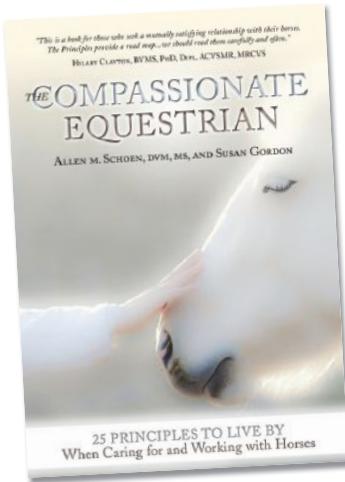
Mary Mansfield, of Concord, Massachusetts, has retired from competition but recalls sacrificing luxuries in the past to make her show budget feasible. She rarely splurged on vacations, expensive dinners or entertainment. In a unique situation, Mansfield was able to borrow a relative's truck and trailer for hauling her horses to shows since she didn't have a trailer of her own.

Mansfield remembers her husband comparing budgets and expenses. He discovered that when she was showing, the cost was about \$40,000. Now that Mansfield is no longer on the competitive show circuit, the costs have decreased to about \$30,000. Mansfield echoes many other horse owners on a budget in her refusal to cut corners on her horses' health and wellness.

Sustaining dressage training with limited financial resources is possible as long as you have energy, determination and resourcefulness. A mindfulness of how money is spent is crucial for dressage riders operating on a budget. As Gray says, "If you want it badly enough, you can do it." ■



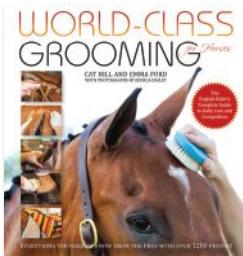
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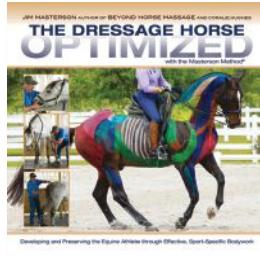
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Dressage Movements

Understanding their purpose and place in the arena.

By Janet Foy

As a dressage judge, I see many people riding in the show ring who don't understand the basic concept of the movement they are trying to perform. I know that sometimes the horse can be difficult and evasive. For example, turn on the haunches: when the rider shows the turns in both directions counter bent, I know she did not read the definition of the movement in the USEF *Rule Book*. This book is a great source of free information—so please take the time and read about each movement you are schooling or performing at a show.

A Purpose

The movements in dressage all have a purpose. They are there to help improve the horse's suppleness, his balance and his reaction to your aids. I find that the movements can also help you discover where your horse needs a bit more work. I am a firm believer that if the movement is not going well, just continuing to practice it with the same mistakes over and over again is detrimental to the horse's training.

If you have a problem in a movement, you, the rider, being the smarter of the two in the partnership, needs to figure out which aid is not working for you. Remember to break down each of the movements and stay true to the Training Pyramid. (There is a lot of detailed information in my book *Dressage for the Not-So-Perfect Horse* about the aids for each movement and how to discover the most basic cause for the resistance you may be having.) Remember, if the Training Pyramid is correct and your basics are correct, the movement will take care of itself.



FEI "I" and USEF "S" dressage judge and "R" sport horse breed judge Janet Foy has officiated worldwide and is a member of the USEF International High-Performance Dressage Committee. In her newest book, *Dressage Q&A* with Janet Foy, she attempts to answer all the dressage questions she's received through the years. In this excerpt, Foy touches on dressage movements—what they are and why they need to be ridden—and answers questions related to various movements. Throughout her new book, including this excerpt, she references her first book, *Dressage for the Not-So-Perfect Horse*, in which she goes into further detail about how to perform each movement. Used with permission from Trafalgar Square Books and available at HorseBooksEtc.com, (800) 952-5813.

Movements and Why You Do Them

These movements stretch the horse, either longitudinally or laterally:

- Leg yield
- Shoulder-in
- Travers and renvers
- Half pass
- Stretch circle (see sidebar, p. 61)

These movements improve the horse's balance (collecting movements) as well as his reaction to your aids:

- Transitions
- Shoulder-in
- Travers and renvers
- Half pass

These movements test the horse's adjustability:

- Lengthenings, mediums and extensions
- Transitions between the paces

These movements test the horse's "sitting" ability (engagement):

- Piaffe
- Canter pirouettes

These movements test the mobility of the shoulders:

- Walk and canter pirouettes
- Turn on the haunches
- Zigzags

Problems and Solutions

Q: How much contact should you keep or release as you perform the stretch circle?

A: You should have the same contact as you do when your horse is on a shorter rein. You can't just throw the reins away. Keep using your bending or inside rein to keep him laterally supple and then slowly lengthen the outside rein as he seeks the contact. Think of being able to half halt with a longer rein and you will get the idea.

Q: Can you explain the stretch circle?

A: The stretchy-chewy circle, as I call it,



If the Training Pyramid is correct and your basics are correct, the movement will take care of itself.

needs to be taught to the horse gradually, not in one day. With a green or young horse, the rider must find a place in the frame where the horse will go 90 percent of the time before trying to change it. The same applies to the tempo of the trot. Once the horse has mastered the idea of stretching equally into both reins, it is time to teach him the bending aids. I find it easier to teach the stretching with his stiff side to the inside. So if the horse doesn't like to bend left, do the circle on the left rein.

Remember, you are going to use the bending to stretch or lengthen the outside of the body while also asking the horse to stretch and lengthen the topline a bit. Using your bending aids, be sure to push the horse's rib cage out with your inside leg, then half halt on the outside rein. When the horse lowers his neck a bit, give a little and allow him to lengthen his neck a few inches.

Don't throw the contact away. The idea is to teach him to go down a few inches more each week. Once the horse has lost the contact, you will have to

shorten the reins and start again. Be sure you maintain the bend, otherwise the horse can just curl his neck and drop it rather than honestly stretch into both reins.

Q: In some dressage tests we are told to make a transition between one letter and another. Can you tell me what this means?

A: In the lower-level tests, a rider is asked to make transitions between two letters so it is easier for the horse and rider to accomplish. At the FEI levels, however, a higher standard is expected and transitions need to be prompt—at the letter—and supple.

This really all relates to how well the elasticity of the horse has been developed. At First Level, the horse will not have a lot of difference between his paces. In other words, his lengthenings will be slightly more ground-covering than his working trot. In Grand Prix, however, you have a lot of different trots, all with a different length and height of stride: The piaffe, for example, is the

Stretch Circle In Trot

The stretch circle in trot is used for the warm-up and cool-down periods of training and is a good test to make sure your horse is adjustable and not rigid in the contact or in a headset. The horse softly chews the reins out of your hands, stretching forward and downward, without losing balance or speeding up. The muscles of the horse's topline stretch and the suppleness in his back should improve. The contact should be such so that you still have an elastic feel with both reins. The horse should also be able to maintain the bend on the circle and not speed up.

shortest trot; the passage is the trot that comes the most off the ground and the extended trot is the most ground-covering. The Grand Prix horse should be able to shift between these trots smoothly and quickly while the First Level horse has only two gears: working and lengthening, and the transition will take more time at this level.

Q: How much difference in bend should I have between a leg yield and a half pass?

A: If you read the definitions in the USEF *Rule Book*, you will see that in leg yield there is, in fact, no bend at all. The body of the horse is straight and there is a slight lateral flexion in the poll away from the direction of travel. In half pass, there is a clear bend throughout the en-

A New Freestyle Movement

I always thought ice-skating had it right. When you invented a movement, that movement was named after you. Remember the "Hamill camel" named after Dorothy Hamill? I invented a new movement, too, but was given no credit for it because it was not in freestyle but rather in a regular test.

I have named the movement, "Zigzag at canter with no change of lead." The judge recognized the difficulty as well and even mentioned it in his comment. The comment read, "High degree of difficulty, but should be ridden in freestyle, not a normal test."

Here is my story: I cantered perfectly down centerline, ready for the 4-8-8-4. My lovely Trakehner stallion, Maroon, was a bit too smart for his own good and was always clever at invention. I was busy counting, and he was busy ignoring my aids. (Must have been that pretty little filly in Ring 2.) Well, the counting was perfect as were the bend and the geometry. It was amazing, looking back, how much bend he could have while on the wrong lead and going the wrong direction. Sigh. I think it was all of those suppling exercises I did at counter-canter, bending him the wrong direction and pushing him in a leg-yield sideways to improve the quality of the canter.

tire body of the horse and this bend is in the direction of travel.

Q: In the Equine Canada tests, the 20-meter circle is at A. I was wondering where the approach should be to be accurate (compared to 20-meter circles at E or B).

A: If you are riding in a large dressage arena, you will have the same circle points in the arena. Think of a snowman that has three sections. There is a bottom, a middle and a top. All three sections are the same size and they touch each other. Now think of three circles, exactly the same size, laid down in the 20- by 60-meter dressage arena. These concentric circles are accurate 20-meter circles and also the path that a width-of-the-arena, three-loop serpentine would take. Remember how many meters are between each letter. From the corners to the first letter is 6 meters. Then there are 12 meters between the other letters. So if you used the I and L between the RSVP letters for your circle points, your circles at C and A would

be too small and you would be riding a 24-meter oval at B and E.

In a small dressage arena, this, of course, changes as the length of the arena is only 40 meters. So here your 20-meter circles at A and C would touch X. The circle points for your 20-meter circles at B and E would need to be on the centerline, 10 meters on either side of X. For illustrations of these concepts, see the sidebar on p. 63.

Q: What do you do when a horse shuts down when doing a simple change? He stops, then I wait it out and he finally moves again. Am I doing something wrong? Do I need to be stronger? I always go back and review the walk and the canter.

A: Usually, being stronger is never the answer. I like that you are going back and reviewing the walk and the canter, but it seems to me he has this habit a bit stuck in his brain now. In another question, you mention you are showing Fourth Level, so this is just a training ex-

ercise for you, not something you need to do in the test. I think sometimes we, as riders, are too stubborn and perhaps here is a good chance to just go back to something more basic for a while and allow the horse to think more forward.

I would avoid walk-canter transitions for now and do a lot of canter-trot-canter transitions, even perhaps doing a little medium trot between the canter to help his brain think "forward" instead of "stop" as he is doing right now. After a few weeks, you can move on again.

Maybe he doesn't see the need to do less than a flying change. He sounds like he has an opinion! My suggestion would be to supple him a bit to the left and even leg-yield a stride or two in canter before you ask for the walk. Since he doesn't want to walk forward, supple and ride him a few strides sideways before asking for the new lead. Think of having a little "renvers-left" feeling before you ask for the new lead as well. This will help keep him connected to the outside (right) rein and hopefully keep him in a better contact.

Q: I have a question about the one-tempis changes. I am new at them, preparing for Intermediaire II. I have the three-tempis down nicely. Getting the two-tempis is difficult! I get excited, then get too busy and, of course, that confuses the issue! Can you help?

A: The two-tempis and the one-tempis can have similar problems. They are basically a series of good single changes. So there are a few tests each day to work on before you start into them. First, make sure you have a good-quality canter with the ability to ride the horse very straight on the quarterline. I also think some simple changes to test this straightness and the new aid for the canter departs should be practiced. Remember, the horse needs to have a quick reaction to the canter-depart aid. Once you have done your homework, do a few one-tempis on the

quarterline to help you think about your straightness. If you feel you have to force the aid or throw yourself or your horse around to get it done, then you need to go back and do your homework.

In these series, horses lose their straightness, then also the impulsion, and it is too difficult for them to continue. Don't be afraid to ride a little more forward in the canter prior to starting the changes and also don't be afraid to stop asking for the changes when the canter quality falls apart. Just go forward a bit and refresh the canter.

Q: When leg-yielding, I always have too much bend through the body and cause my horse to "pop" his outside shoulder. I see a lot of riders making the same mistake. Any advice?

A: The leg-yield is the second lateral movement we teach the horse. The correct use of leg-yield will teach the horse to move more off the inside leg and over to the outside rein. However, a lot of horses figure out quickly that they can move their weight onto the outside shoulder rather than really increase the lateral suppleness of their body. I suggest you go back to turn on the forehand for a while and teach the horse to keep his outside shoulder more in place with the outside rein and a small amount of counterflexion as you move the hind-quarters over. Some work in-hand will help with the correct reaction to this aid, too. Then, when you do your leg-yields, don't be afraid to counterflex the horse a bit at times to remind him not to push through the shoulders.

Q: I used to ride with hunter/jumper trainers and many were critical of the demands put on dressage horses, saying that at the highest levels many of the movements are unnatural. This seems contradictory to what dressage is about: willingness and fluidity. Can you please comment on this?

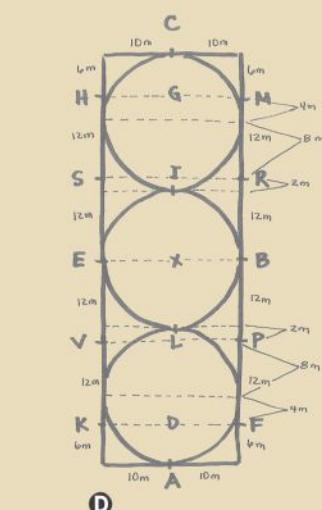
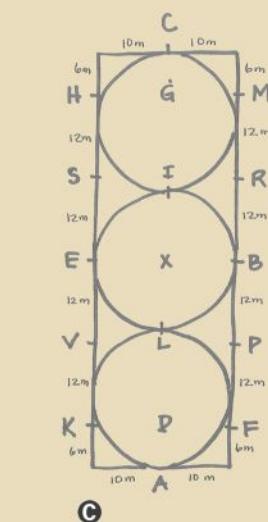
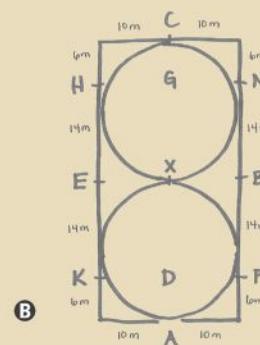
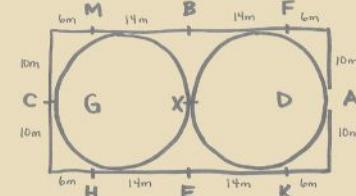
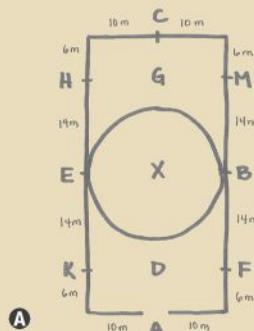
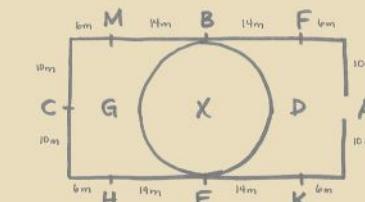
A Guide to Accurate Circles

Drawing A (horizontal and vertical) shows the correct placement of a 20-meter circle at B or E in a small 20- by 40-meter dressage arena.

In Drawing B (horizontal and vertical) you see the correct placement of a 20-meter circle at A or C in a small 20- by 40-meter dressage arena.

Drawing C depicts correct placement of 20-meter circles at A, C, E or B in a large 20- by 60-meter dressage arena.

In Drawing D you see the same circles as in C, showing the exact location of each circle.



bookexcerpt

A: I would just point out that our dressage athletes are often 17 years old at the Olympic Games and still sound. Good dressage improves the horse's physique and, therefore, his longevity. I often see dressage movements from foals in the pasture. The only thing I don't see is a horse doing half-pass or going sideways.

Q: I was hoping to get some insight on a problem that I have been having with my mare. She is a 9-year-old Danish Warmblood, working lightly under saddle, mostly walk and trot. She is really stiff to the left. We have been working on lots of bending and suppling in that direction. Figure eights help. Lately, she has been fishtailing when I ask her to bend left: She swings her butt way out.

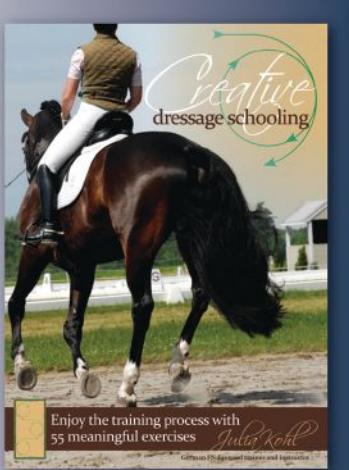
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Aha! Moment

My "Aha!" moment was when I figured out how to use the dressage movements to train my horse—not just to train my horse to do the movements.

The movements are there to help us create suppleness, collection and engagement. However, the movements can be dangerous without good basics. For example, I see horses that love to go sideways, but the riders cannot ride them on a straight line. This is an incorrect use of lateral work. Also, remember you need to be able to go more sideways or less sideways; in other words, be adjustable and in charge.

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I try to use my outside leg, but she stops dead and will throw her head all around. I try to reinforce with a whip, but that makes her buck. I am stuck on trying to fix this.

A: Make sure your mare really understands all the bending aids. It sounds as if she understands the inside rein to bend the neck and turn the shoulders, and to move her rib cage away from the inside leg. I am not so certain she understands that the outside leg behind the girth means to keep the haunches in. I would work a bit at walk with head-to-the-wall leg yield and introduce—or reintroduce—the response to the outside leg behind the girth.

Q: Can you tell me what makes a correct half halt?

A: There are actually different half halts for different movements. The weighting of your seat, and which leg is active will tell the horse which movement to expect. The rebalancing half halt is the perfect combination of the driving aids, the bending aids and the outside rein.

Q: How should a rider know if she is ready to show at a certain level?

A: Good question! I think that people say, "I am a Third Level rider," or "My horse is at Third Level," just because the horse does a flying change. They don't realize that the other piece is the horse's balance: The horse might do flying-changes or even a half-pass, but does he perform with collection and cadence? Is he uphill? Are the basics correct? I often say if the basics are correct, the movements will take care of themselves.

So the correct balance of the horse and the fulfillment of the Training Pyramid (which can be found on the front cover of every USEF Dressage Test under "Purpose") is of the utmost importance. ☐

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Compiled by Kat Neis

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Noble Outfitters' Show Ready Glove is made for the dressage ring with classic goatskin for a polished look. This glove features a mesh panel over the top of the hand to create a comfortable fit with flexibility and ventilation. It also has stretch panels on the fingers to provide freedom of motion. The glove retails for \$34.99. Visit nobleoutfitters.com.



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Frank Baines Saddlery has released a new dressage saddle called the Union Lux, a single-flap saddle with an exterior knee block. It features the popular Frank Baines dressage tree that allows for freedom of movement through the horse's shoulders and spine. The Union Lux is covered in calfskin to give a close-contact feel. The saddle retails for \$3,350. Visit frankbaines.com.

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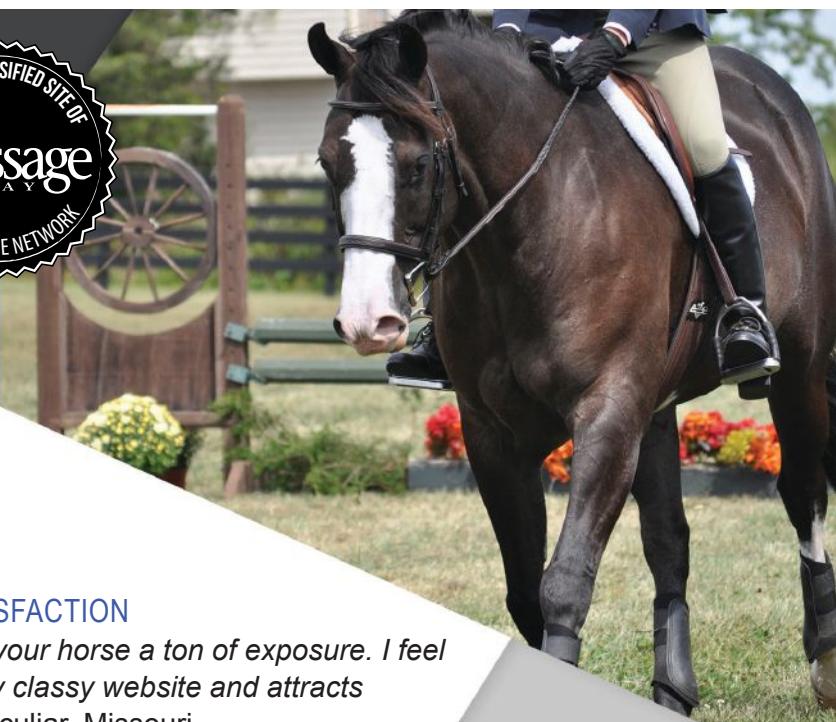


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Preventative Spray

Officinalis DER has released a new insect repellent and coat-conditioning spray. Part of a skin-care line designed specifically for horses suffering from recurrent summer dermatitis, commonly known as "sweet itch," this product contains natural essential oils, such as lavender, geranium and neem. These ingredients help combat dermatitis, soothe irritated areas and maintain healthy skin. The 500ml bottle retails for \$24.95. Visit englishridingsupply.com.



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How Much Forwardness Do Baroque Horses Need?

Q

Do baroque horses need just as much forwardness as warmbloods? I own an Andalusian mare, but feel that every time I try to collect her, her trot and walk simply get slow but not elevated and collected. How forward should I ride her to develop elevated collection, especially at the walk and trot? How do I know the forwardness is not too quick?

Name withheld by request

JEAN-PHILLIPPE GIACOMINI

It appears that you are applying a method generally practiced with big-moving warmbloods. The current approach to collection consists of riding very forward, then reducing these big strides into shorter ones by successive half halts. If the horse has a natural rebound, this system can produce a higher, more suspended movement, but it doesn't work well with Iberian horses not born with this natural rebound. It can nevertheless

be developed by an adequate method.

Iberian horses have economical gaits that shorten easily without elevation. My own Grand Prix horse, Orion, can jog like a Western horse, but he can also produce overtracking extensions in a slow cadence and brilliant passage and piaffe. As British Olympian Carl Hester says, "Great Grand Prix horses often look very ordinary in their warm-ups." There is no need for a display of enormous trots.

Iberian horses have considerable natural adjustability and they will develop any form of the gaits you want as long as you train it in a manner adapted to their biomechanics. If you push them forward too soon in the progression with too much energy, they will become rushed. If you then hope to transform that running stride into a higher step by shortening it from front to back as a way to get collection, you will just get the flatter trot that is frustrating you.

The majority of Iberian horses only start to offer suspension in extensions and passage. They elevate their stride easily by starting from slow collection, but not from overtempo. The late Portuguese riding master Nuno Oliveira always insisted on the importance of working horses in walk by doing endless gymnastic exercises with slow, energetic steps. It is the fluid sequence of these judicious patterns associated with the delicacy of the rider's aids that foster real collection, not hustling or compressing the horse.

The work must be done in a tempo that suits the horse (strides just a little bit longer than his collected trot), with enough activity but without damaging his balance or cadence. The slower "school trot" will emerge from all the exercises done in that soft working trot: shoulder-in, counter shoulder-in, half passes on curves and straight lines and halts and rein-backs with frequent variations of gait between slightly bigger and smaller strides. The same work must be done in canter with many transitions from trot to canter (to increase the engagement) and canter to trot (to increase the scope of the shoulders). An active counter-canter practiced forward in the bend of the turn, transitions into trot and the poll at the



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Iberian horses have considerable natural adjustability and they will develop any form of the gaits you want as long as you train it in a manner adapted to their biomechanics. Here Juan Manuel Muñoz Diaz rides Fuego XII, a P.R.E., in the 2013 London Olympic Games.

highest point with a loose contact will help produce impressive medium trots. Eventually an extension in a slow cadence will emerge and transform your mare.

That is the classical progression. When you develop a good school trot with a round movement, and a slower cadence in a very light contact, the horse can learn a soft form of passage, asked as an upward, forward and slow gait, that is not demanded backward from the medium trot. From there you will be able to get any trot you want: higher, slower, longer, but always engaged and with a full gesture of the front legs. The name of the game is the adjustability of the gait developed in a good cadence and self-carriage not by forcing an overactive horse into a constant big trot. If you watch British Olympians Charlotte Dujardin and Carl Hester, you will notice that they prefer very quiet work to maintain Valegro's balance with the least amount of hand aids. Carl affirms that his champion started with "a very ordinary walk and trot" that was developed slowly until his amazing quality emerged. You can obtain this result by working patiently with numerous transitions, turns and exercises, letting the horse understand his job.

Iberian horses "invented" classical dressage, and this is the method that suits them. The care you give to the beginning

of the training will pay you back in droves at the end. It may take a lot longer to get Iberian horses to impress in lower level classes, but if the foundation work has been done right, they will learn the difficult movements very quickly and reach the Grand Prix much faster than other breeds. Correct foundation work does not consist of endless repetition of simplistic 20-meter circles while maintaining the perfect posture of the show ring, but by the practice of many small exercises that challenge the horse's balance and intelligence. Even if the horse is not performing those movements perfectly, he will quickly improve. Don't be scared of making mistakes. They will evaporate with no-pressure repetitions.

"Haste slowly" is a good motto for dressage training.



Jean-Phillippe Giacomini

was born in France and started his dressage career in Portugal, studying with Nuno Oliveira and Jose Athayde at the Portuguese National Stud of Alter Real. A popular clinician, he and his wife, Shelley, own Baroque Farms USA, a breeding and training farm in Harrodsburg, Kentucky.

What are the Steps of Teaching the Capriole?



Why do we so rarely see classical movements such as the capriole? How is the capriole taught? Is it based on classical dressage training or is it a trick?
Name withheld by request

FRANK GRELO

The most spectacular of the school jumps is the capriole. It is an exercise that requires a horse with a lively temperament and a trainer with great knowledge to prepare the animal for what he can so graciously perform on his own only two to three days after being born. The preparation is long; the execution is about two seconds. Let us briefly analyze the work it takes to get there.

When performing a capriole, the horse shifts his weight backward, jumps off the ground up to double his height, then kicks out with his hind legs, keeping the front end tucked in, then lands

with all four legs simultaneously on the ground. The capriole is the most difficult of all the *haute école* movements. If the piaffe is considered the pinnacle of competitive dressage, the capriole is the pinnacle of the *haute école* movements. It is an extremely difficult exercise for the horse, and only few horses (and trainers) achieve it.

Following the rules of classical horsemanship, the basic exercise for the capriole is the piaffe. If this is well done, we enter into the domain of the airs above the ground, which begin with the levade. Then we follow the sequence of teaching the horse the croupade, ballo-

tade, then capriole.

From the piaffe, the horse learns how to lower his hindquarters to the point where he transfers all his weight onto his hind legs, lifting his front legs off the ground, then tucking them in to produce the levade. The deeper the horse is able to sit in the levade, the more powerful the capriole will be later on.

From the levade, the horse is encouraged to jump with a touch of the whip. At first the horse performs what is more like a croupade—a jump with the four legs tucked underneath himself.

As the horse gets more familiar and physically stronger, the jump becomes



Paula da Silva - And.nl

Following the rules of classical horsemanship, the basic exercise for the capriole is the piaffe. From the piaffe, the horse learns how to lower his hindquarters to the point where he transfers all his weight onto his hind legs, lifting his front legs off the ground, then tucking them in to produce the levade. The deeper the horse is able to sit in the levade, the more powerful the capriole will be later on.

higher, and again with the touch of the whip while in the air, he is encouraged to kick out. At first this is usually a jump where the horse's four hooves or shoes

the front legs tucked in and under, landing with all four legs on the ground at the same time—this is the capriole.

The whip is an important commun-

ication tool in teaching the airs above the ground. In the course of his training the horse learns to react to small touches of the whip. It is crucial that the horse regard the whip as an instrument and is not afraid of it. It acts like a baton in the hands of the conductor of an orchestra.

can be seen from behind—it is called bal-lotade. At this point, more athleticism and familiarity with the movement are required to move into a clean capriole. The trainer works to lower the angle of the levade in order to catapult the hind legs into a higher jump. He cracks the whip in the air when the horse's body is horizontal to the ground, and the horse releases a strong kick with both hind legs parallel to each other with

All the work is done from the ground first. Once the capriole is confirmed from the ground, a rider is able to perform this school jump from the horse's back. Unlike smaller horses such as Andalusians, Lusitanos or Lipizzans, bigger and heavier horses will rarely achieve the capriole. The capriole is part of a tradition that students of classical horsemanship have learned for over 400 years. It takes supreme preparation of the horse and patience as well as an extraordinary trainer with a lot of feel for the horse. It also takes a talented and strong horse to be able to achieve such heights of horsemanship.

Frank Grelo

has devoted himself to the breeding and training of the Lusitano horse while teaching the timeless art of classical riding to students from around the globe. His dancing horses have appeared in movies, television commercials and print advertising. He owns Grelo Farms in Caledon, Ontario, Canada.

Are There Any Tips for Fitting a Saddle to a Baroque Horse?

Q

I recently purchased a 5-year-old Andalusian and need to find a saddle that fits him correctly. Is there anything specific to his breed that I need to consider when searching for a new saddle?

Name withheld by request

JOCHEN SCHLEESE, CMS, CSFT, CSE

Saddle length has become more of an issue over the past few years, as breeding seems to have concentrated on making somewhat more compact (i.e., shorter) horses. This is especially prevalent in the baroque-style horse—a category that includes the Lusitanos, P.R.E.s, Andalusians, Friesians and, more and

more frequently, the modern-type warmbloods who have relatively flat withers and a shorter saddle-support area (the area where the saddle must sit). Riding these horses in a normal saddle with a regular panel can result in behavior that indicates something is off. One common saddle-fitting issue faced by these breeds is that the panels on dressage saddles often are

too long for the horses' backs. In order for a baroque horse to develop to his full potential and work willingly, happily and without pain, it is crucial that he have a saddle with panels that are the correct length for his back and that do not impinge on the kidneys or the ovaries of a mare.

If you are concerned about the saddle being too long for your short-backed horse, you must ask yourself the following questions:

1. Does my horse have a four-beat canter?
2. Does my horse have tense back muscles that impair his movement?
3. Does my horse buck or show resistance to move forward?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you may be faced with a saddle-length issue.

Many of us are familiar with the term "short-backed" to describe a horse, but few of us are aware that even a horse

with a back that appears to be of normal length may actually have a very short saddle-support area. The length of this area is what saddle makers and saddle fitters are concerned with since this will determine how long the panels of this particular horse's saddle must be.

You can identify your horse's saddle-support area by doing the following:

1. With a piece of chalk, outline the edge of your horse's shoulder blade (as shown in pictures 4 and 5 below).
2. Locate your horse's last floating rib (see picture 3 below). To do this, find where his hairlines come together in the area of his flank and draw a line straight up to his spine.

The saddle must sit behind the shoulder. Particularly at the canter, a saddle that is too long often will get driven forward into the shoulder. Beyond making movement difficult and



Courtesy, Jochen Schleese

Important Aspects of Saddle Length

1. Here is a skeletal diagram showing the proper saddle support area with respect to a horse's rib cage.
2. I am pointing to the last supporting rib on a horse with a saddle that fits properly within the boundaries of the saddle-support area for this particular horse.
3. The red lines represent the changing directional pattern of hair on the horse's body relative to the last supportive vertebra (notice the panel of the saddle does not extend past this point).
4. The first chalk line represents the front of the scapula (shoulder blade), whereas the second chalk line represents the last supportive vertebra.
5. My left hand is pointing to just behind the shoulder blade, where the saddle ideally should be placed and not extend past the last vertebra outlined.
6. I am drawing what I call "pain lines" from pinched nerves that appear on some horses when they have an ill-fitting saddle.

painful, this can produce a buildup of scar tissue on the scapula. Over time, the scapula may be chipped away by the tree points of the saddle.

The saddle also cannot extend past the last floating rib. If a saddle is too long for a particular horse, the rear of the panels will extend past the horse's saddle-support area. This is extremely uncomfortable for the horse, as it puts pressure on his lumbar region. A horse ridden in a saddle that is too long will often tighten his lower back muscles. In some cases, you can see the horse hollow and drop his back in an attempt to get away from the pressure of the saddle. He may even buck in extreme cases in an effort to get the weight off his lumbar area. Finally, he may have difficulty moving forward into the canter or may simply be persistently off for no apparent reason.

**Jochen Schleese,
CMS, CSFT, CSE**

is the author of *The Silent Killer and Suffering in Silence—The Saddle-Fit Link to Physical and Psychological Trauma in Horses*. He helps discover optimal saddle fit for riders and their horse with a diagnostic saddle-fit evaluation (saddlefit4life.com).

If these are issues you have been facing and have been unable to attribute them to a specific injury or illness, then perhaps it could be that the saddle is too long for your horse's back and is making him extremely uncomfortable, which is why this acting out occurs. Think about how you would feel if you had something constantly pounding into your

kidneys. An ideal solution is to have a saddle with a shorter panel to accommodate the horse's back, even if the rider needs a little bigger seat. We always say that the top of the saddle needs to fit the rider, the bottom needs to fit the horse and the tree needs to work as the interface to accommodate the needs of both. Sometimes you have to look past the obvious symptoms to find the cause.



Courtesy, Jochen Schleese

One common saddle-fitting issue faced by baroque breeds is that the panels on dressage saddles often are too long for the horses' backs.

Are Mares Harder to Import and Sell than Geldings?



I have been looking for a horse in Germany and noticed that there are many more mares for sale than geldings. I also found out that importing a mare is much more costly and time-consuming than importing a gelding. Why is this? Would you recommend importing a mare if she's a good dressage prospect? Are mares more difficult to resell in case the purchase doesn't work out for me?

Danielle Higgins
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

DIANE RODICH

To begin, when you say that you have found more mares for sale than geldings in Germany, do you specifically mean in the country of Germany versus the United States? If so, it may appear this way because there are more horses in Germany population-wise than in other countries, which equates to there being more mares in general. Also, you may be coming across more mares than geldings in your search by random chance. In my experience, I have found that there are an equal number of mares and geldings for sale in

Germany. However, at any given time of the year when I am looking for a horse to buy in Germany, I may come across more mares or more geldings that meet my criteria.

Mares are more expensive to import than geldings because they must be tested for contagious equine metritis, otherwise known as CEM. CEM is an unusual, sexually transmitted disease that is not life-threatening and is curable. In addition to the standard two- to three-day quarantine period that all horses imported into the U.S. must go through, mares must spend 15 to 21 days at a long-term quarantine facility. During



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this time, three cultures are taken and if the results of all three cultures are negative, the mare is released. If the cultures are positive for CEM, the mare must be treated, a period of 21 days must pass, and then the mare must be retested. It is uncommon for a mare to test positive, but it does happen.

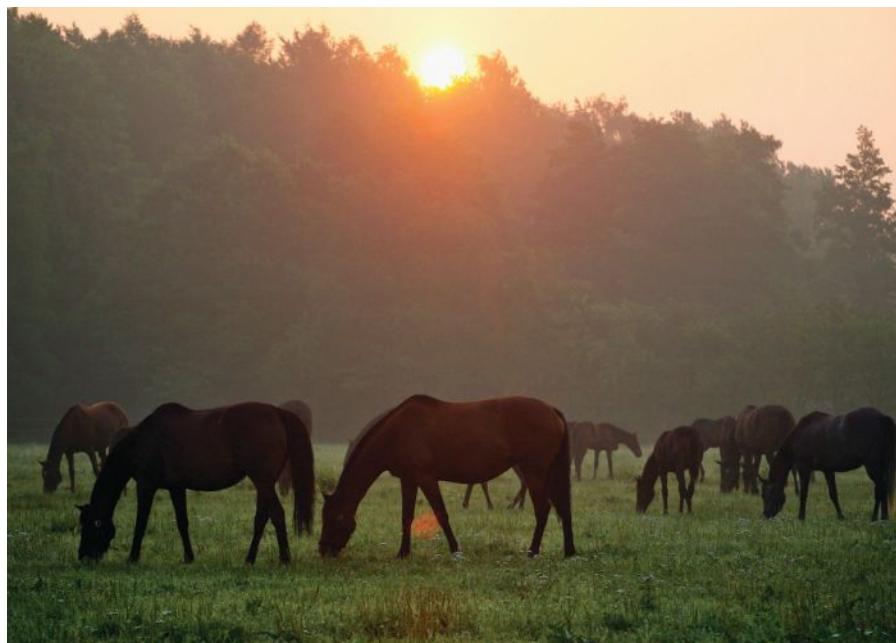
When considering a mare, keep in mind that mares have a reputation for being more temperamental and opinionated than geldings. One reason for this is that mares seem to have a heightened sense of awareness of the herd pecking order. While this is often construed as a negative, many people feel it is a positive, as there are mares who perform better for their riders than geldings do. Also, during breeding season, which is from March/April through

October/November, mares go into estrus/heat cycles for five to seven days every 21 days. As a result, many mares display estrous or "mareish" behaviors both during their cycles and throughout breeding season. Some of these behaviors affect their performance and may include being herd-bound and distracted; being stiff, tense and/or overly sensitive in their backs and to the rider's aids; urinating and pinning their ears, squealing and/or kicking out at other horses. When you are looking at a mare, you should



Diane Rodich

is a USDF silver medalist, USDF Certified Instructor through Second Level and a USDF "L" Education Program graduate. Her experience includes importing and selling horses from Europe for clients and for resale for the past 12 years. She owns and operates Top Class Dressage based in Riegelsville, Pennsylvania, and Ocala, Florida.



Arnd Bronkhorst - Arnd.nl

When considering a mare, keep in mind that mares have a reputation for being more temperamental and opinionated than geldings. One reason for this is that mares seem to have a heightened sense of awareness of the herd pecking order.

ask the seller what her behavior is like when she is in heat and also throughout the breeding season. Keep in mind that you can't always trust a seller to tell you the truth about this, so you should be aware that these behaviors may show up at some point after you have purchased a mare.

In the event that you do buy a mare and she begins to display any of these undesirable behaviors, you can give her a progesterone supplement—a synthetic pregnancy hormone that will keep her from having a heat cycle. Progesterone is available in an oral form that is given daily or as an intermuscular shot given once every three to four weeks or as needed. It is effective in eliminating the estrous behaviors in approximately 90 percent of the mares who receive it and there are few side effects. The negatives to giving progesterone are

1. It is expensive; the average cost is approximately \$100 to \$150 per month.
2. The daily oral version must be administered with gloves, as it can adversely

affect a woman's hormone activity.

3. The intermuscular shot can sometimes cause swelling at the injection site.

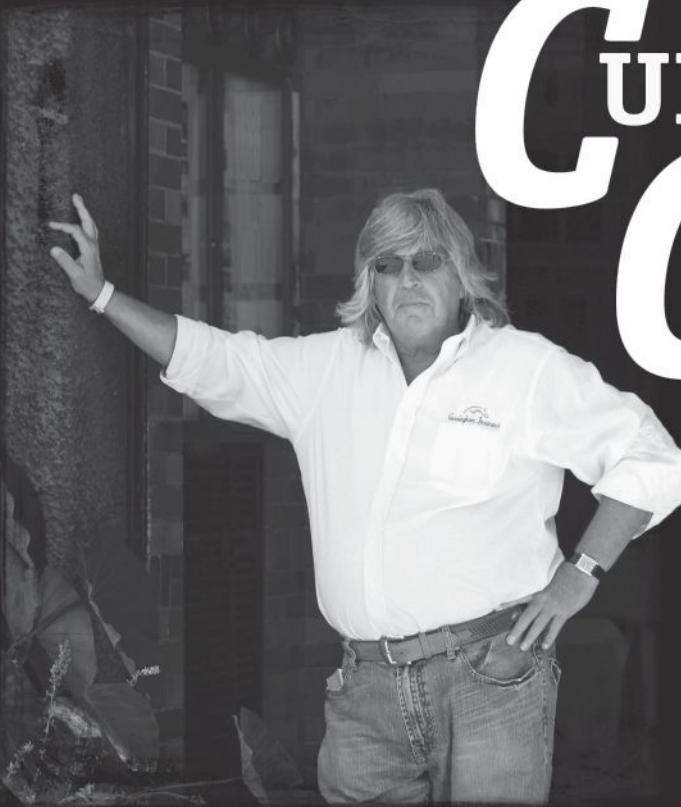
With regard to your question about resale, in my experience, I find that mares are often more difficult to sell than geldings because of the reasons mentioned above. On the flip side, I do come across buyers who only want to purchase a mare and will not consider a gelding. This is usually because they had a great experience owning a mare before and/or they want to be able to use the mare as a broodmare when she is older and/or if she gets injured.

In summary, I would not be adverse to importing a mare if you are a well-suited match. ☺

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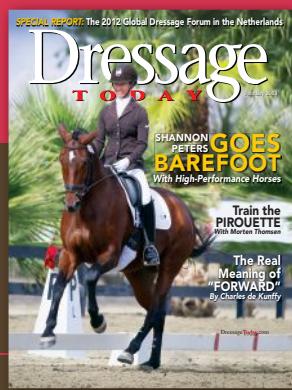
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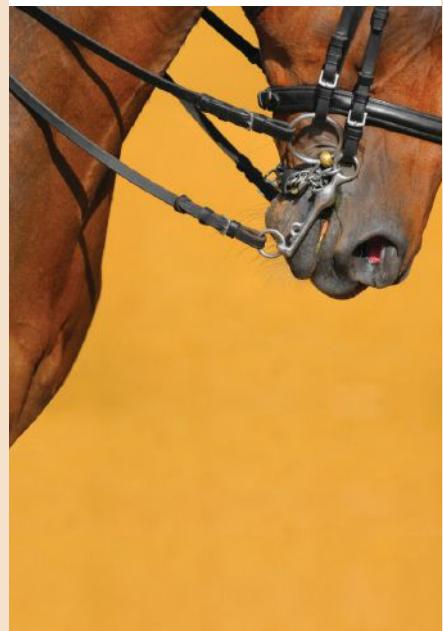
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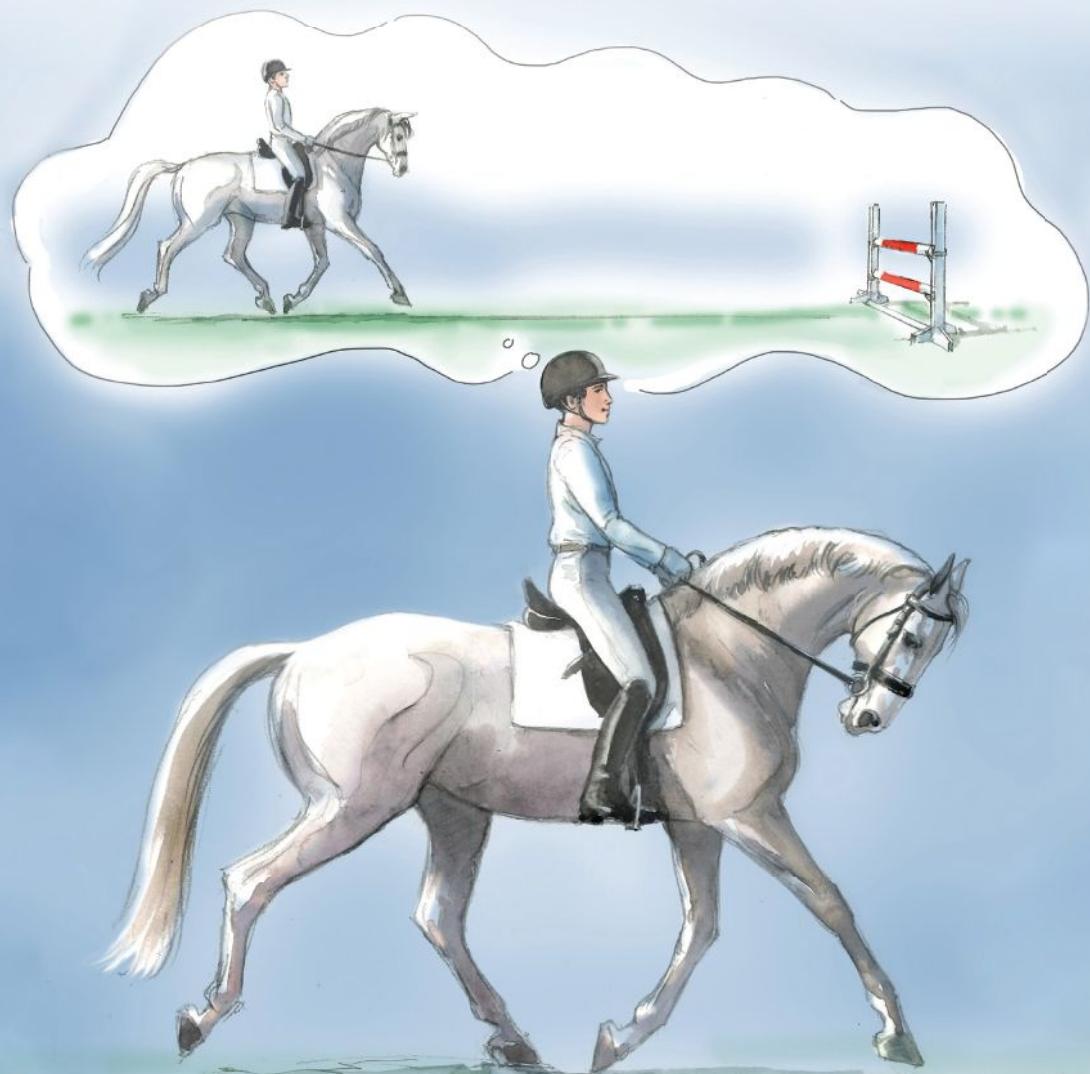
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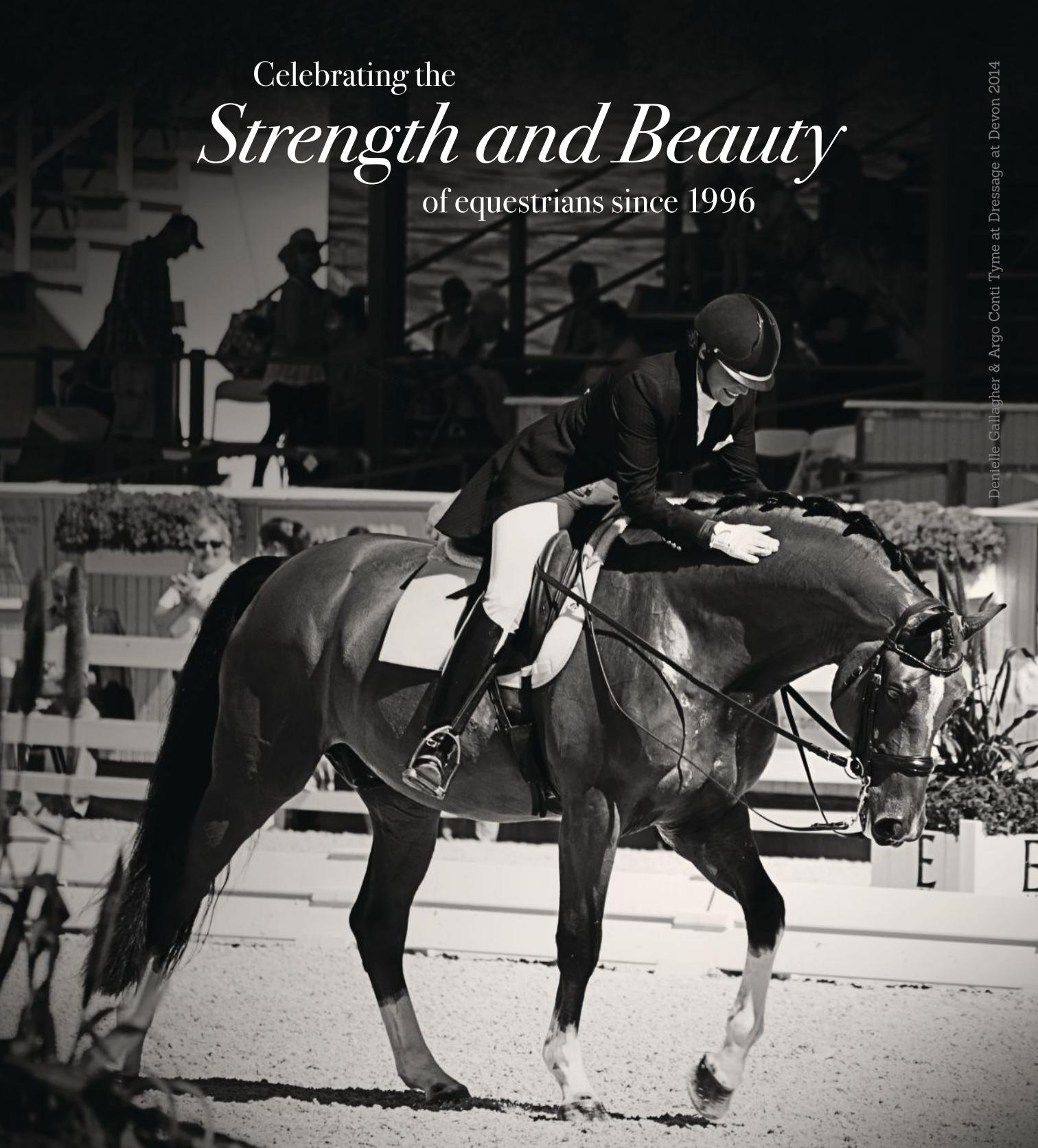
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